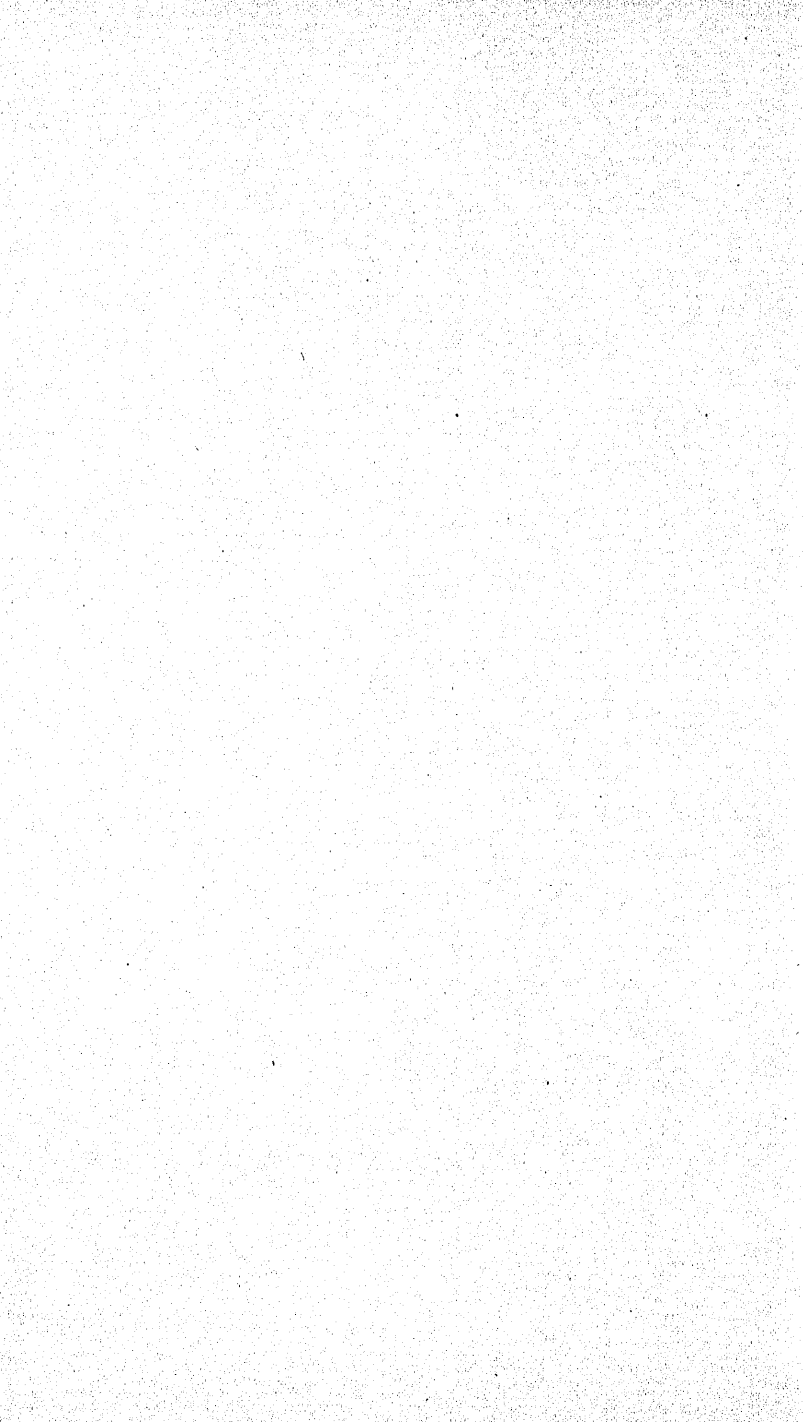


BV
4531
.H28

The University of Chicago
Libraries









BOOKS BY S. RALPH HARLOW

HONEST ANSWERS TO HONEST QUESTIONS

SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS PROBLEMS OF YOUNG
PEOPLE

(WITH SYDNEY A. WESTON)



Honest Answers to Honest Questions

Samuel,
S. RALPH HARLOW



ABINGDON-COKESBURY PRESS
NEW YORK • NASHVILLE

HARLOW
HONEST ANSWERS TO HONEST QUESTIONS

BV4531
.H28

Copyright, MCMXL, by
S. RALPH HARLOW

All rights reserved—no part of this book
may be reproduced in any form without
permission in writing from the publishers,
except by a reviewer who wishes to quote
brief passages in connection with a re-
view written for inclusion in magazine or
newspaper.

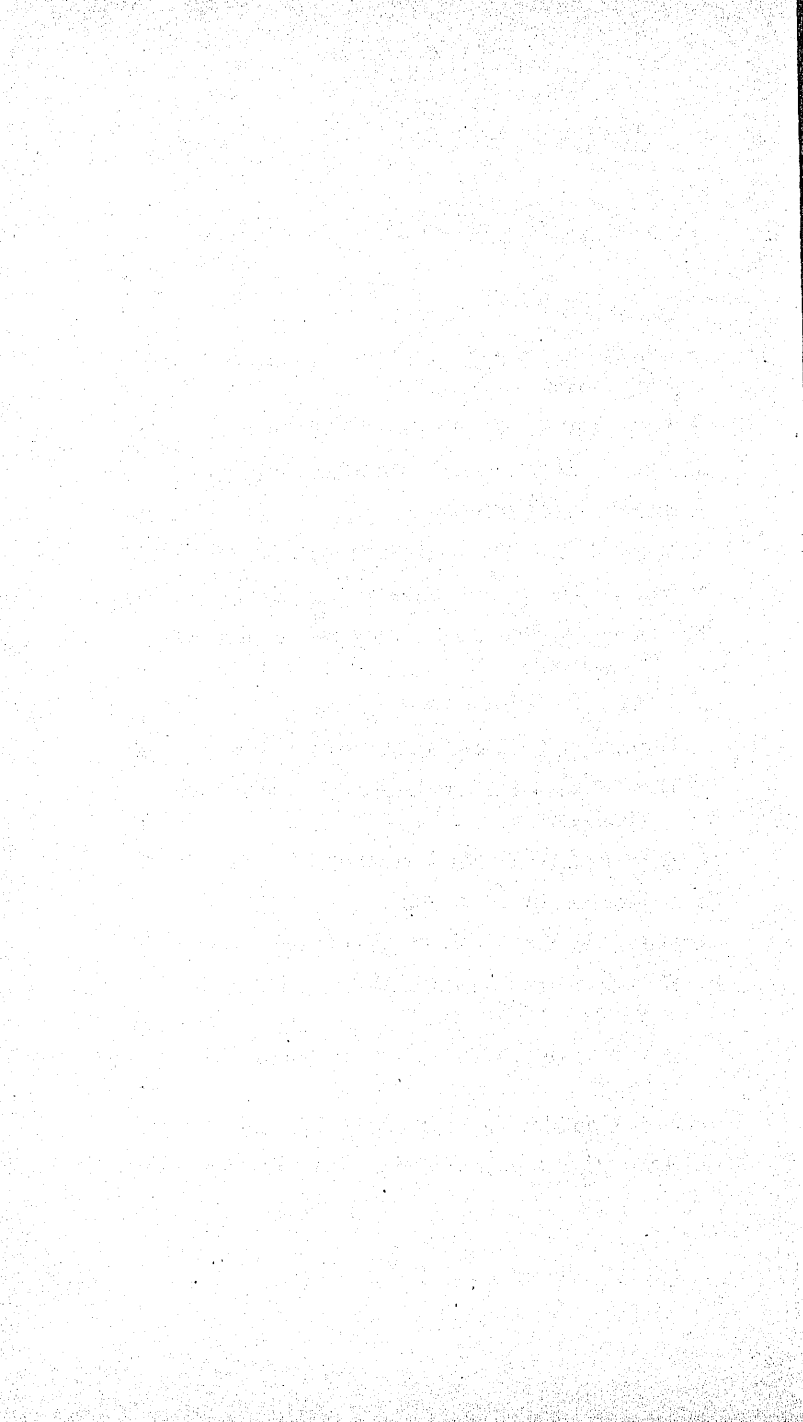


Printed in the United States of America

*Proc. Theol.
also, Sch.*

CONTENTS

	PAGE
FOREWORD	7
1. TO CHEAT OR NOT TO CHEAT: THAT IS THE QUESTION	9
2. IS IT EVER RIGHT TO TELL A LIE?	14
3. DID THE CAPTAIN PLAY FAIR WITH THE SCHOOL?	19
4. IS PETTING HARMFUL?	23
5. WHAT IS THE TROUBLE WITH OUR MOTHERS?	28
6. SHOULD WE ALWAYS HONOR OUR PARENTS?	33
7. SHOULD A PROTESTANT MARRY A ROMAN CATHOLIC?	37
8. IS AMERICA A CHRISTIAN NATION?	43
9. WHAT SHALL WE DO ON SUNDAY?	49
10. HOW MUCH OUGHT A CHRISTIAN TO SPEND ON HIMSELF?	55
11. IS INTERNATIONALISM UNPATRIOTIC?	62
12. IS DEMOCRACY PRACTICAL?	68
13. WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY "RELIGION?"	77
14. DOES SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH THROW DOUBT ON RELIGIOUS TRUTHS?	84
15. IS A CODE OF ETHICS A SUBSTITUTE FOR RELIGION?	88
16. DOES GOD HAVE A PURPOSE FOR MY LIFE?	96
17. WHY BELIEVE IN LIFE AFTER DEATH?	101



FOREWORD

AMONG many questions which I have heard raised by young people in student conferences and in visits to schools and colleges in this and other lands are some which have been asked many times by both young men and young women. These I have selected for the chapters which follow.

With the world in such a state of chaos and war it may seem strange to invite discussion of personal problems. Yet it is only when we as individuals learn to master our own inner lives that we can hope to be of ultimate service to a world of suffering.

While it is true that the circumstances of the world about us strongly influence our thoughts and actions, it is even more true that what takes place in our inner world of thought is of greater significance. Those things which we believe by faith govern our attitudes more than those material factors which beat in upon our senses.

Are we growing up into the kind of men and women who accept responsibility seriously? Are we increasingly dependable? Do we take life as a trust or as something of the passing moment out of which we seek to squeeze all the selfish pleasure and excitement possible? These are questions of supreme importance for the future of the home in America, for the nation at large, and for the whole of humanity everywhere.

It has never been easy to be a Christian in this pagan world; perhaps today it is more difficult than at any time in modern history. There is a growing con-

FOREWORD

viction that never have we had greater evidence of the need for Christlike living than in this our day and generation.

S. RALPH HARLOW.

Northampton, Massachusetts

TO CHEAT OR NOT TO CHEAT: THAT IS THE QUESTION

RECENTLY I boarded a trolley with a group of high-school students. The car was already full, so we stood crowded together on the rear platform, a few of them standing in the aisles of the car. My attention was attracted at once to their conversation. Without the slightest indication that they had been indulging in a practice that some might call questionable, they began telling how they had cheated in an examination just taken in the school. It is true they did not call it "cheating." With squeals of mirth, each told how he had "put it over" on the teacher, "got away with it," and utilized other terms familiar to those engaged in this indoor sport.

One boy, evidently an athlete, who had held up "the honor of the school" on the football field, revealed to the admiring crowd his method. He wore a special sweater on such days, a sweater with many pockets, and each pocket had contained several "helps" in the examination. From the general approbation I judged that the "honor of the school" was well up-held by this sturdy young athlete of seventeen.

I was especially interested in their estimate of another fellow student not present on the car. He was spoken of as "a nut." All agreed that he was a good student, easily I gathered, the best in the class in mathematics, and—*he would not cheat*. Against the general camaraderie, which such a practice builds up among schoolfellows, he dared to stand aloof and alone. The conversation ran thus: The boy with the

HONEST ANSWERS TO HONEST QUESTIONS

sensitive conscience we will call "Jim"; our athletic hero, "Bill." Bill speaks: "Naw, he didn't get away with anything today, either. I haven't cracked a book this week, and I'll bet I get as good a mark as Jim does." From another: "Gosh, Skinny beat him out on that test last week." General laughter, it being revealed that "Skinny" is a "dumbbell." "If only Jim would get wise, with his brains he could lick the whole class." But they passed him up as hopeless because he would not join them in their little game with the teacher.

On the following Sunday I was preaching in a New England church, and during the service gave a short talk to the young people. I used the illustration of the athlete who cheated, and the boy who refused to cheat, and asked the question, "Who won?"

At the close of the church school, which followed the morning service, the superintendent of the school came to me and told me that my talk on cheating had been debated in nearly all the classes where there were high-school students. He told me that the great majority of students did not agree with me. Let me tell you part of what I said in the talk, and then what the high-school students in the church school said, and think over with whom you agree.

I said in part: "I ask you to consider who really was the winner in this examination—the boy who cheated and received a higher mark, or the boy who refused to cheat and was given a lower mark on his paper? If we look only at the papers, we will say at once, 'Why, this boy with 96 wins over the one with 89.' But is that all that those marks reveal—96 and 89? Seven points better and *nothing more?*

"Let us suppose that these boys have fathers and mothers who want their sons to grow into honest

TO CHEAT OR NOT TO CHEAT

manhood. From babyhood they have prayed and sacrificed, that their sons may become the kind of men who will serve God and their fellow men. Bring in now these parents and tell them the facts about this examination and ask them, 'Who won?' Which paper would you rather claim for your son—the 96 or the 89? Which mark stands higher in your judgment? Will one set of parents assert at once: 'We know the boy who refuses to cheat is our son. We see him day in and day out; we know we can trust him, count on him, believe in him. We claim *the honor* of that paper marked 89.' "

Suppose the other parents say, "We wish we could be sure that that paper marked 96 wasn't the work of our son, but we're not sure." Or, let us bring the boys in before these parents. Let the boys read in their mothers' eyes the eager desire to have it proved that her boy played fair; that is just what I mean—"played fair," didn't *cheat*. Suppose that the boy has been "getting away with it" at home, "fooling" his parents into thinking that their son wouldn't cheat in this way. Then let *the facts* be known. Ask the boys *who won* in that examination.

Follow these boys on through the years. Supposing that each continues to hold his ideas and ideals as to honesty on the level revealed in this examination. Watch them take their entrance examinations for college. Their chances will depend now, not on how many helps they can stick into sweater pockets, but on how much they have honestly attained by hard, faithful study. Ask the college faculty which boy they would rather admit to their classrooms. What will the answer be?

Go out into life. Suppose yourself a merchant, a banker, a lawyer, a minister. Which of these boys

HONEST ANSWERS TO HONEST QUESTIONS

would you rather have associated with you in partnership, sharing responsibility with you? Who wins?

Above all, let us consider the fact that these boys have to live with themselves. As they go home from that examination, back of the laughter and jokes is there nothing in that boy, wearing the school letter for defending the school's honor on the field, that rises in protest and says, "*You cheat*"? When the papers are given back and he sees the mark he won by cheating, is he wholly glad? And the other boy, as he joins his family at the dinner table, is there a real regret that he might have answered one of those questions better had he only sneaked—that is the word, "*sneaked*"—a little piece of paper into class and secretly looked at it under his desk? When his paper comes back with 89 instead of 96, does he mourn those seven points which cheating might have brought him? Not if I know anything about that type of boy, and I do know many of them.

So on through life. Which boy will win out in the end, in the estimation of his own family, who know him best and hold him dearest, with the men with whom he comes to associate in his lifework, with his own conscience and his God? Who wins?

Well, the high-school students thought my attitude was a little "rough." Most of them, I discovered, used "helps" themselves. "I wouldn't exactly call it *cheating*," one said to me. How we do like to pet our own vices and abominate the other fellow's!

Of course not all who cheat attempt to excuse the dishonesty, nor stop to argue over nice definitions. For all such, and for those who twist and evade by expert pretexts, the real argument seems to me a direct appeal to the result of this habit on the formation of character.

TO CHEAT OR NOT TO CHEAT

The results of any form of dishonesty of this kind should be related to the aim and purpose of an education. Is it not to awaken and quicken in us the desire above all else for *truth*? Is it not to develop intelligent, dependable men and women? If education is to help us "gain a standard for the appreciation of other men's work and the criticism of our own," then it is essential that we lay foundations on absolute honesty.

This week something happened in one of my classes that raised my estimate of one of my students, though it lowered her mark. I had just corrected a set of examination papers. The papers had been corrected on a train at night.

I returned the papers to my class and went over the questions, asking my students to follow their answers, making sure that I had made no mistakes in my corrections. One of my students who had received an "A" came to me. She had an excellent paper. She called my attention to the fact that I had added an extra ten to her points in adding the total. Subtracting these ten points reduced her mark to "B," but I shall always know that there is a young woman who can be depended upon in any situation or crisis to do the right thing.

Think it over. Was I too hard on the students who cheated? Many of the high-school students who listened to my talk, the outline of which I have given here, said that I was. If you agree with them I would like to ask you a question: *Do you cheat?* If you do, your answer is already prejudiced. If you have used this method in the past and agree that this practice is just what I have stated it to be, sneaky, sly, dishonest, and unworthy, resolve to cut it out.

IS IT EVER RIGHT TO TELL A LIE?

THERE is no moral quality which influences so profoundly all our relationships with one another as that of truthfulness. No friendship, no home, no group, no business, no school, no church, no State could endure apart from truth. Every day of our lives we are utterly dependent upon the word of others for our happiness. Even unintentional falsehoods cause great worry and trouble. Take, for example, the potential cost in a wrong telephone number, an incorrect address, a wrong figure on a timetable, mistaken directions on a bottle of medicine!

So all life is based upon our belief in one another, our assurance that we can depend on each other's word and deed. For I am not speaking here of just the spoken and written word. One's actions express the truth as well as one's lips. It means that one plays fair in every game, hands in under one's name at school only what is one's own work, turns in an examination paper which represents only honest answers, not answers cribbed or secured through cheating.

There is probably nothing which can ruin the reputation of a boy or girl, man or woman, so quickly as the report that he or she is a liar, a person who cannot be depended upon. What statements I make and what I do represent what I believe and what I am. By my statements and by my actions I can expect to be judged. A lie indicates that back of the lie there

IS IT EVER RIGHT TO LIE?

is a liar; an action that is dishonest proclaims that back of the action is one who is dishonest.

And yet life is full of dishonesty and society is menaced with cheaters and liars. Open your newspaper any morning and you will find the record of someone whose life has proven to be a lie. When you get down into the story, you will discover that the trouble began with little dishonesties. Here is an only son who has just disgraced his father. The trouble, as I happen to know, began way back in a preparatory school where a group of boys used to gamble for pennies. This year I had a long talk with a student just expelled from school for lying. It all began with one little lie. But that lie had to be covered with another till scores of lies were told before the truth at last came out.

Here are some other examples of dishonesty of which I know: A boy was running a school entertainment, and everyone trusted him. The returns from the entertainment showed a slight surplus. A close friend of the boy knew that he had made away with the larger part of the returns. Would you trust that boy in business later on? I know of a group of girls in a school who came to a small group of boys and said: "We control enough votes to carry this school election. What will you offer us if we throw our influence on the side of the candidates you want to put into office?" In politics later, could those girls be trusted not to buy and sell votes?

I read in a book recently this statement: "The secret of hypocrisy is the desire to appear well without paying the price that right costs. A man who lies deliberately hangs out a wrong signal. He creates distrust as to the dependableness of any other signal he may ever make."

HONEST ANSWERS TO HONEST QUESTIONS

I know better than anyone else, and with an accuracy no one else can ever discover, whether my word can be depended upon, whether my signals are true or false. Down underneath where I live with myself I must also judge myself. Few of us sink so low but that we may down deep despise the liar and the cheat, especially if that liar is right inside our own mind and body.

When we come to the religion of Jesus, we have no trouble at all in finding out where Jesus places his emphasis in regard to truth. The New Testament is full of that word "truth." Not only does Jesus denounce falsehood in word and deed, but he proclaims that only through the Truth can men come to know God. The worst picture he can give to incarnate evil is to say, "He is the father of lies." When he denounces the Pharisees, he tells them that they are liars.

In the Epistles the truth is emphasized again and again. Saint Paul writes, "Lay aside every falsehood, every one of you should speak the truth to his fellow men; for we are, as it were, parts of one another." And in the picture of the Heavenly City we read that no liars shall have any part of it, and that there cannot enter into it "anything that worketh abomination or maketh a lie." The glory of the Christian religion has been and is that it is a challenge to "Follow after Truth."

But I have not answered the question heading this chapter if the accent is put on the word "Ever." I must be utterly honest with you. I can imagine circumstances when I would not tell the truth if I were forced into a position where to tell the truth would put a weapon into the hands of another to be used against the whole spirit and method of love. For our rela-

IS IT EVER RIGHT TO LIE?

tionships with one another are not only based on truth, they are based also on other influences. This law of love is the great fundamental Truth. To the Christian the law of love is the law of life. And where a statement of facts would put a weapon in the hands of those who would use those facts to abuse and destroy and overthrow the law of love, I would feel that I would be sinning against the highest Truth to give them such facts.

Let me give concrete illustrations. A poor Armenian refugee comes fainting to my door, pursued by a band of Turks seeking her life. I give her protection in my home. The Turks come up and demand whether I have seen the woman. If I refuse to answer they will search my house and drag her out. If I tell the truth I give her into their hands. I would certainly, by so doing, be uttering a terrible lie against the greatest Truth in my heart, the law of love. To give them the facts would be to put into their hands a weapon with which to torture and kill one whom the law of love demands that I protect.

This might be another illustration. A mother and a child have been in a terrible accident. The mother has two other little children at home. The child involved in the accident dies. The doctor tells me that the slightest nervous shock would cause the mother's death. The mother asks how the injured child is. I assure her that the child is all right. To me that would be a greater truth than to tell her that which would take the beloved mother and wife from those children and that father waiting in anxiety in the home.

These, however, are such extreme situations and arise so seldom that we can safely take it as a rule for our lives that it is never right to lie. In the forty

HONEST ANSWERS TO HONEST QUESTIONS

years of my life I can remember no circumstance when it seems to me it would have been right to tell a falsehood or deceive by an action those who expected from me the truth.

DID THE CAPTAIN PLAY FAIR WITH THE SCHOOL?

IN a championship football game between two rival schools, the score was 10 to 6, with less than a minute left to play. It had been a long, hard battle from the very kick-off. Darkness was settling over the field. The captain of the team on the short end of the score stepped back for a last desperate try from his thirty-yard line. The signal for a drop-kick was given. Back flew the ball into his hands. His entire school was on its feet praying that the ball would go straight and true across the bar. There was a moment of heartbreaking suspense, the sound of the captain's toe on the pigskin, and straight as an arrow the ball sailed over the bar.

From what had seemed certain defeat the school, whose heart followed the flight of that ball, was lifted to the heights of victory. From 10 to 6 against them, the score now read 11 to 10 in their favor. It was back in the days when a drop-kick counted five.

As the thunder of the cheers came across the grid-iron the referee signaled that the kick was successful. Just then the whistle blew and the game was over.

Then a strange thing happened. While the crowd of cheering students were seeking to lift the hero of the hour to their shoulders, he was making equally frantic efforts to be heard. At last they got his words. "Call the referee. The kick wasn't fair. It must not count. I kicked *before* the ball struck the ground. It was a punt."

The referee blew his whistle and talked with the

HONEST ANSWERS TO HONEST QUESTIONS

captain. He then announced that he must change his decision, that the kick could not count, and that the score would remain 10 to 6.

Did the captain do right to tell? Did he play fair with his school? Was there any other honorable course? A referee's business is to watch the play and make the decisions. The captain had not intended to cheat. He had simply been overeager. A fraction of a second had meant the difference between a drop and a punt. In the dusk no one else had noticed the mistake. Ought he to tell? Scores of his fellow students said, "No." He "lost" the championship of the school, he "handed the game over" to the enemy. If the referee failed to see the mistake, why drag in a puritanical conscience and "rob" the school of a hard-earned "victory"? So the talk went. *What do you say?*

Your answer will depend, I believe, on what your idea of the *aim* of your school ought to be; your idea of what kind of boys and girls your school ought to allow to wear the school uniform out on the field or in the gym. It goes back to what your idea of upholding the "honor of the school" really is. For every school and college has its "code of honor." Generally this is not written, but the school knows its traditions and stands by them.

In some schools the "honor of the school" is bound up with winning athletic victories. Boys and girls alike go wild over the winning team, and the students who bring "honor" to the school are the lions of their fellow students. To many of them this captain was a fool, who sold out his school because of an overworked conscience. Instead of thinking about his own little code of honor he ought to have had some heart for the school.

My impression is that "school honor" has taken a

DID THE CAPTAIN PLAY FAIR?

big rise since my own school days, and I know that college honor has. I believe that most of you will stand by the captain in his frank confession and honor him for it. But be frank. Don't say so unless you mean it. You'll say it was tough luck and he should have kept his head and kicked after the ball had touched the ground, but he did the square thing not to let it count when it was a punt, even though he could have got away with it and brought home a championship.

Athletics are much cleaner than in my day. One of the men who has helped bring about this change is a fine Christian gentleman and athlete. Back in his school days he was the captain who refused to let his punt count. He has acted as an official in more Harvard-Yale games than almost any other man. He has been known for his absolute fairness. He has brought more "honor" to his school and college than had he won a dozen football championships. He has set a standard for the school to *live up to*.

What is the aim of your school? Is it just victory at any price you're after?

Are trophies for the athletic room the objective of your school teams or playing a clean game, winning only when you can win clean? Would you rather have the impression abroad that your teams always win or that your teams always can be counted on for a fair deal? Would the school resent a gain made by unfair means when the officials didn't happen to see as much as though it was seen and a penalty inflicted? What is your "code of honor"?

Where would the boys and girls of your school have stood had that captain been your captain last fall? Suppose your team had lost its championship through that confession in the last minute of the game just

HONEST ANSWERS TO HONEST QUESTIONS

when victory had seemed snatched from defeat? Just what would the talk in the stands have been, and on the way home?

What attitude do the girls in your school take toward these problems? Does their attitude help the boys to play fair or to play just to win? What do you girls say to this?

IS PETTING HARMFUL?

SOMEWHERE between the ages of fifteen and seventeen there comes into the life of every normal boy and girl an experience which is as catching as mumps or measles. Sooner or later they are sure to take it. This experience is a remarkably increased interest in the other sex. A boy who two years before would say, "Girls, shucks, only sissies play with them," and who loves to taunt his younger sister, will suddenly discover that his whole day may be made wonderfully happy or utterly spoiled because some girl has been nice to him or the contrary. He will spend enough time brushing his hair and seeing that his clothes are pressed to make up for the years when he didn't care how he looked and was his mother's despair.

A girl who has been romping and playing all her childhood with a crowd of boys and never noticed anything particular about Johnnie, except that he has an extra number of freckles and laughs louder than the other boys, will suddenly discover that there is something about Johnnie that makes him much more wonderful than the Crown Prince, and to be in his company gives her a feeling of special joy. They discover that when their eyes meet or their hands touch they are thrilled at each other's presence.

This new experience seems to change all of life. Even the springtime seems more wonderful, the glory of the colors on the trees in fall takes on new beauty, and earth seems full of new music. Poetry begins to have a deeper significance and songs come uncon-

HONEST ANSWERS TO HONEST QUESTIONS

sciously from the heart to the lips. It is very good to be alive.

Out on the athletic field it seems as though one could perform deeds of glory if the *right* girl is watching, while from the stands *one* boy will often change the appearance of an entire team. What *he* does and what *she* thinks become of the utmost importance.

In countries where women are considered as mere chattels of men, there is little courtesy extended to them. How often in Turkey I have seen a man ride up the dusty road while his wife, or wives, trudged wearily behind, carrying the tools with which they had been working in the fields during the hot day, while their lord and master watched them from the shade of a tree.

It is in this period of youth, when girls and boys begin to notice each other, that esteem for the other grows. Nothing finer can happen to a boy in these years than to have the friendship of a good, pure girl. There is nothing that can make for the finest in womanhood in the girl's life at this time than the friendship and trust of a straightforward, clean-thinking boy. They may feel that they are more than friends, that they love each other. It may grow into such an understanding as leads to an engagement and in later years to a happy marriage, but whether this happens or not, it will be a fine and noble experience to have forgotten *themselves* in caring in an unselfish and pure way for *another*.

Nothing in life more clearly indicates clean and fine thinking than those thoughts and acts which are the expression of normal sex impulses. At the same time we hear a great deal about self-control in sex matters, and it is most necessary. The best way to attain self-control over evil things is to get plenty of exercise

IS PETTING HARMFUL?

in good things. You can't like bad company long if you once know what clean, worth-while fellowship is; you won't want to travel with a set where self-respect and self-control are lacking if you have been with a crowd that knows how to have a good time that is clean and square. Friendship with a girl who is a comrade in the things that *lead life upward* is the finest and the best. If only girls could realize at this age how much lies in their hands; often it is the whole future character of some boy friend. I don't hesitate to say that prayer and reading the words of Jesus daily are the best helps in keeping at one's best.

On the other hand, it is a mean and cowardly attitude into which many a boy slinks for excuses when he has been petting. He blames it on the girl. He says, "I only went as far as she let me," or "Didn't she start it?" I have heard boys say that they were not to blame for going as far as the girl was willing to go. And we call them "the weaker sex"! But I have heard girls say that they had to permit intimacies on the part of boys or they would be cut out of good times and all the fun. What an excuse! Lower your whole standard of womanly conduct for some group who haven't a fine thought in the whole crowd, or have never faced the serious *facts* back of some attitudes taken by boys and girls of this age! It is called "the dangerous age." It ought to be *one* of the happiest ages; not *the* happiest. It is a tragedy if in later years, when one should be in the midst of a happy family life and helping to meet the world's great problems, he can say, "My youth was the happiest time." But too often this is not the case. I will tell you one big reason for this. It is "petting."

A girl who permits a boy, and generally several boys, to take liberties with her, giving them her kisses and

HONEST ANSWERS TO HONEST QUESTIONS

letting them make love to her, when *it is not real* and has no beautiful and holy significance, cheapens herself. Every time she does it she makes it a little less possible to think of marriage and love as something holy and sacred, and those sweet intimacies as reserved for the one who is her true and abiding lover. The other day on a train a friend of mine was talking with an eighteen-year-old high-school boy. They got on this subject of "petting." The boy showed my friend sixteen notches in his belt, cut with a knife. Each notch stood for some girl who had let him kiss or hug her. They were his "prizes." Do you think that he held in high regard any of those girls? After a long talk with my friend it turned out that this boy was a Christian and not bad at heart at all, just thoughtless about the things that are serious, and serious about things that are trivial. He gave that belt to my friend and has started to treat girls as though they were personalities to be held in reverence. Do you not think that he will be a better husband, and father to his daughters, some day for this changed attitude? Too often these liberties lead on to shame and disgrace.

I have not said and I do not mean that it is wrong to feel a thrill in the presence of another. The question is, Do you recognize in that other a personality to be held sacred, to whom you will make no advance and receive none that has no worthy motive back of it? "Petting" is based essentially on a *temporary* use of emotions and intimacies that were made sacred by God, and around which the family life is built. To misuse and make common these gifts of God is to degrade and make common the holiest relationship between man and woman.

In closing let me beg for a consideration on the part of the boys and girls who read this message of friend-

IS PETTING HARMFUL?

ship with *numbers* of the other sex. I do not mean flirtations; I do not mean romance; I mean fine, clean comradeship and friendship. Between boys and girls who are Christians such friendships ought to be numerous. Boys need the point of view which the girls can give, and the girl needs the point of view of the boy. Together, and only together, can men and women work out the greatest problems of this generation. No generation of boys and girls ever was trusted together with as much intimacy as this generation. No generation of boys and girls ever had a finer chance to understand each other than has this generation. What will you give to the *next* generation out of your experience—a higher or lower standard in the relationship between men and women? *It is up to you.*

WHAT IS THE TROUBLE WITH OUR MOTHERS?

AN American girl was summing up the philosophy of youth, a philosophy which seemed woven of the moonlight, the music of the orchestra floating down the white deck, and the balmy softness of that June night on the ocean. Even the throb of the engine, driving the great ship with resistless power, seemed in tune with the girl's line of thought.

"The trouble with our mothers," she was saying, "is that they suffer from a hangover of Puritanism which took the joy out of living. They were taught to suppress and even feel shame over perfectly normal and healthy emotions, and to look askance on any of their sex who dared break through the conventions. It made pious little prudes out of lots of them and hypocrites of others! Whatever *our* faults may be we're not hypocrites, and we're certainly not prudes! We're working toward a better understanding between men and women. We get more real joy out of living in a month than our mothers did in a year. We're not afraid *to live*. In language they wouldn't even have understood *we get a kick out of life and they didn't!*"

"You said it, honey!" exclaimed her school chum. "Holy mackerel, what a life, what a life! Hey, Ducky, wake up!"

"Ducky," so called because of the little ducks on his sweater—a name given to him by the girls before they had learned his baptismal one—yawned and sat up an inch in his steamer chair.

"The trouble with our mothers," he essayed, was

WHAT IS THE TROUBLE?

that they not only feared to break the code set for them, they were still under the impression that an autocratic Ruler of the universe would chalk up a black mark against their final account if they left the straight and narrow path. Just imagine our mothers thirty years ago out here on this ship. It's Sunday, with a full program of games and recreation all day, and how many of our crowd did you notice at the divine service held in second class this morning? I looked in the window and counted three of our crowd. Our mothers would all have been at the service and this evening would have sung hymns around the piano down in the lounge, fooling themselves that they were having a swell time."

"For Pete's sake, if it isn't old Bill Morgan! Gee, boy, you're a sight for sore eyes. When in thunder did you come on board?" Ducky exclaimed, as a tall young athlete came striding up the deck.

Bill joined the group, one of the girls making room for him on the edge of her steamer chair.

"Meet my friends, er—Miss Culver and Miss Burns, Patsy and Tommy for short. Mr. William Morgan, star end on our victorious team last fall."

"Oh, Mr. Morgan, I saw *you* in the Syracuse game," Patsy exclaimed. "Say, I liked you right away. Gosh, you could tackle. How does it feel out in front of that big crowd, being a hero?"

"Please cut out the hero stuff," Bill replied.

"Oh, but you *know* you *are* a hero," Tommy broke in, "with your picture in the papers. Geel!"

"I'm going to call you Bill. Morgan reminds me too much of Wall Street and I want to forget Little Old New York for a while," Patsy chimed in.

"I'm sure flattered," Bill replied.

"Patsy's just been handing us her philosophy of life,"

HONEST ANSWERS TO HONEST QUESTIONS

Ducky explained. "Go to it, Pat; give Bill some of your precious wisdom."

So Patsy repeated with some elaboration her analysis of the difference between the present generation of youth and the generation of which their mothers had been a part.

The girls didn't know it but Bill Morgan had just been elected president of the Christian Association of his college. He was not only a good end and fast in the sprints, one of the most popular men who wore the college letter, he was also known to stand four-square for the highest ideals on the campus.

He was no prude, this six-foot-three young American, and no man who had ever come in contact with him would have dared suggest that he was a hypocrite. Bill was full of the joy of living, but there were some things that he could be serious over besides football or a track meet.

Just now he was on his way as a delegate to an international conference of students, at which thirty nations would be represented, for the purpose of establishing more friendly relations between peoples and races, torn by hatreds, and strife, and fear, and the danger of another world war.

To Bill Morgan life still held some things worth conserving that had come out of the tested experience of the past.

When Patsy finished he looked up with a smile, that smile that had won him friends back in his prep school days and had not been changed to a sneer or a blasé expression in the three years at college.

"I'm with you on a lot you say," he began, quietly. "This freedom's great, but isn't it a responsibility, too? Are emotions all right, fully expressed, any place, any time? *Not on our football squad.* No one has a

WHAT IS THE TROUBLE?

ghost of a chance to make the varsity who can't master and discipline his emotions. And I know mighty well where the man is in a race who hasn't put some things under his control. The fellow who is loyal to his college and his team has got to believe that some things are worth going without, and submit himself to some stern discipline, if he's going to *count* for his college and his team." He paused for a moment, then went on:

"I'm not saying your smoking here is a sign that you lack fine ideals or a worth-while purpose, but I'm dead certain no girl who gets a craze for liquor or for cigarettes is going to be the kind of woman my mother is. Mother played golf and tennis with us from the time we were kiddies; she can swim like a fish; in fact, she's a regular pal. But the thing that makes me happiest is that she tried to teach us self-control and the value of certain things in life. She's got some of the Puritan in her and I'm glad of it, but she's no prude, and no girl of my acquaintance is truer or more on the level than mother. I can't imagine anyone ever getting fresh with her when she was a girl or taking liberties with her, but I'll bet she was popular with the boys, and anyone like her would be today.

"I'm right glad my sisters have learned something from her of the value of personality and of the respect that women, if they are the right sort, ought to expect from men, if the men are worthy of real friendship.

"As to what you have to say about God. Well, my mother is a Christian, and she lives it every day of her life. Last year, when father was suddenly taken from us, and five years ago when my baby brother died, I saw something of my mother's religion that I wish I had more of. Sure, she expresses her faith in words, some of which have ceased to have the same meaning to me that they have for her. Still, I know for myself, now, and I

HONEST ANSWERS TO HONEST QUESTIONS

hope to know more some day, of values in life that cannot be apart from God.

"I wonder if our frankness and our freedom do not place on us a fine responsibility to master our emotions and impulses for worth-while ends. After all, hasn't the progress of the race, which has given us such freedom, come to us as a heritage from men and women who gained this release from fear of brute force and unchecked passions because they disciplined and controlled themselves? If we abuse it, will not the next generation suffer, perhaps lose the thing we cherish so much for ourselves?

"Gosh, this sounds like preaching, and I never expected to say this when I started, but, well, there's a college chum of mine who has just gone to the devil, and from what I saw in his home the trouble started with his mother. I've heard his mother talk just the way Patsy here gave it to us. You talk as though this idea of freedom were something brand new. I mean the idea of following your impulses. It's old as history. And my chum, Jim, was raised on it. No laws except self-made ones; anything right that expresses 'beauty, love, and truth,' and every man for himself as to what 'beauty, love, and truth' are. Marriage based on 'love' with the right to break the marriage vows the moment you think 'love' is gone. And what stuff I've seen called 'love'!

"Jim's living under another name now, trying to start over again, with the odds all against him, after a year in prison for killing a little child while speeding under the influence of booze."

"Say," broke in Tommy, "are you a theological student? Where did you get all this, anyway?"

"No," Bill smiled at her, "I'm planning to go into law. I guess the trouble must be with my mother."

SHOULD WE ALWAYS HONOR OUR PARENTS?

SOMEONE has said that there is just as much authority in the family as ever, only now it is the children who have the authority. On all sides we hear a great deal of talk about the lack of respect on the part of young people for those who are older, especially for their own parents. Most of us have seen children who made no pretense of doing what their fathers and mothers would have them do, and in some cases we have probably known children who boasted that they "did as they pleased" regardless of what father and mother might think.

Is there any real basis for the old attitude that children should obey their parents and hold them in honor? And is there any limit to that old commandment, "Honor thy father and thy mother"?

It was my mother who carried me under her heart and loved me before I was born. For me she walked through the valley of the shadow of death that I might have life. When I was too little to care for myself she nestled me in her arms and knelt by my crib at night. My first faltering steps were taken with my hand in hers and through all my childhood sickness she was my only nurse. My tears were her sorrow and my laughter her joy. At her knee I learned to pray, and in her love I first discovered what God's love was like. She never lost faith in me. In my school days she studied with me and helped me prepare for college. If I have found the service of Christ, it is because she set my feet on the path he trod, and when death comes, it will be my

HONEST ANSWERS TO HONEST QUESTIONS

mother's prayers and faith that will still be a light in the darkness.

Before I was born my father prayed that I might be strong and true and good. His first sentence to my mother the morning I was born was, "Perhaps some day he will be a missionary." Not till I was in college and decided that I wanted to be a missionary did I know this, yet all those years my father's loyalty to Christ and his service was a constant challenge to find for myself the glory of such service.

It is when we sit down and *think* of all that father and mother have given for us in love, in service, in sacrifice, that we really come to a sense of the honor that is theirs by right.

But our fathers and our mothers are human and make their mistakes. Even when these mistakes are very great, if we will count the hours they have given to us in loving care, we cannot escape the feeling that we still owe them a great debt.

On the other hand, we must face the facts that there are fathers, and even mothers, who are selfish, and who stand in the pathway of their children when those children come to manhood and womanhood and would serve the great King. I think of mothers who have tried to prevent their daughters giving their lives to Christ for missionary service among sisters of another race who were in great need. I know fathers who have done their utmost to prevent their sons turning from paths which offered rewards in money and position to answer a call that offered little in worldly rewards but abundant service to others. Can we honor such parents? We can still love them, but if we are followers of Christ how can we honor their selfish choices?

Would Saul of Tarsus have become the mighty messenger of Christ had he gone home to ask his parents'

HONORING OUR PARENTS

consent? Would Jesus have gone to the cross had he listened to his family, even his mother's pleas? I know many young men and women who have followed Christ when it meant that they had to face the displeasure and often the anger of their parents.

A young man once stood in a court to receive a prison sentence. His father had been a great lawyer, and the judge who was to sentence him knew this. He turned to the prisoner and said, "Do you remember your father?" Then he added sternly, "That father whom you have disgraced." The young man replied: "I remember him perfectly. When I went to him for advice or companionship, he would look up from a book on the law of trusts and say, 'Run away, boy, I am busy.' My father finished his book, and here I am." How could that boy honor his father in that hour?

Far more often fathers are like that father in the French Revolution. His son bore his name and they were both prisoners. One day the son's name was read among those called to die. The father answered the name and took his son's place. He went to the scaffold and laid his head on the block. The blade of the guillotine flashed, the head fell, the father died for the son he loved. So countless fathers would give their lives for their children.

If only we could see with clearer eyes, we should see that they are giving their lives for us, these parents of ours, whose words we take so lightly. The old clothes that mother wears that the daughter or son may have a better chance at an education, the countless little sacrifices our eyes so often miss, made gladly that we may have a chance to grow into nobler manhood—do we count them?

It is probably in the years when we ourselves have children of our own that we look back and remember

HONEST ANSWERS TO HONEST QUESTIONS

with deep gratitude the loving thoughts, the countless sacrifices, the nobleness of life and character of our fathers and mothers. Happy indeed is the man or the woman who can look back on childhood years with no regrets because of loving words unspoken, loving deeds undone, which might have brought joy to father and mother.

Judge Lindsey tells us of another boy, brought before him in the juvenile court in Denver. The boy was only thirteen, and again and again was brought up for truancy. His teacher told the judge that Tim stayed out of school to work. Judge Lindsey told him that there would be time enough later on to work. To this the boy replied: "My father was a man, and did not work. He went off and left mother and me. I guess that's what killed her."

One day Tim appeared in court with a happy face, and pulling a soiled and crumpled piece of paper from his pocket handed it to the Judge. "I'm goin' to remember all the things you told me, and I'm goin' to school regular, now I got that done," he said with some pride. Judge Lindsey looked at the piece of soiled paper. It was a receipted bill for fifty dollars for a headstone. Little by little Tim had been paying for that headstone for his mother's grave to express the love and honor he felt for her. "I wanted her to have a monument, Judge," Tim said, as he furtively wiped away the tears that would gather. "She done a lot for me; that's all I could do for her now."

If some of you must face the hard and bitter fact that your father or mother is selfish and thoughtless, then I hope you will have the courage to follow Christ's call to service, even though it must lead you into paths your parents would bar you from entering.

SHOULD A PROTESTANT MARRY A ROMAN CATHOLIC?

YOU ask my advice as to whether you should marry a Roman Catholic girl to whom you find yourself much attracted; and, from what you write, the attraction is mutual.

The Roman Catholic Church plays fair in this matter. It stands unalterably opposed to such marriages. By word and rules it seeks to discourage Roman Catholics from marrying outside of the Roman Catholic fold. The Church believes that such marriages prove unhappy and, unless the non-Catholic enters the Church, there will be no spiritual unity in such a home. I have never met a Roman Catholic priest who did not oppose such unions, nor read in any Catholic publication anything save opposition to marriage with non-Catholics.

While the Church is unable to prevent members of its fold from marrying non-Catholics, it places every possible barrier in the way of such a marriage being consummated.

Protestants do marry Roman Catholics and are often happy, though, strange to say, I have had the experience numerous times with such couples, where they say, "We are happy but we would not advise others to do what we have done." They know how great the risks of such a marriage are, having gone through with it. Before you go too far you ought to face all the implications. I propose to help you see as clearly as possible just what lies before you. You can check with the young lady the questions I raise, or, in case she does

HONEST ANSWERS TO HONEST QUESTIONS

not know the answer, you can go to her priest and ask his advice.

Let us take the Roman Catholic position in such a marriage as yours would be. First of all, as a non-Catholic, you will be held to have no true conception of religion, and, as marriage is considered by the Roman Church to be a sacrament, you will have no final say as to what your marriage service will be like. The Roman Catholic Church will decide that for you. In most parishes the priest will forbid your being married at a second service, after the Catholic ceremony. In numerous churches only Catholics are permitted as attendants in the bridal party, so that you might be unable to have your brother for your best man or your sister for a bridesmaid.

Before the priest will consent to marry you there are a number of things which you will be expected to do. You will have to take a course in the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church. Will the young lady be willing to take such a course in the Protestant faith from your minister, who will be very glad to talk with her, and for which there will be no charge?

Then you will be expected to sign under oath a statement that all your children of such a marriage will be brought up as Roman Catholics. This will be difficult for you. *You are asked to sign away your spiritual rights to your own children.* If you are true to this pledge, you will not take any step to share with your children the point of view toward religion which I know you hold, and which is very different from that which the Roman Catholic Church claims is the only true faith. A great host of men and women have suffered torture, the inquisition, loss of their property and their liberty to keep alive that freedom of the conscience and of religious liberty for which Protestantism stands.

PROTESTANT-CATHOLIC MARRIAGE

All this which you hold you must not share with your children. You give them to the Roman Catholic Church to be raised in all their spiritual thinking according to the teachings of that Church.

Of course to those to whom religion means little, or who take all such pledges as of no significance, this will not matter, but not so with you. Religion in your home, in so far as it is expressed outwardly, will be Roman Catholic in form. There will be no give-and-take, no compromise, in which three days in the week you are allowed to express Protestant conceptions and ways of worship, and on the other four your wife may observe Catholic ways and forms.

Many Roman Catholics in this situation count on the Protestant breaking down and joining the Church. Every possible pressure will be brought to bear to that end. But will you? Is the assumption justified?

And be sure that you will have to contribute to the Roman Catholic Church. There is a constant demand on Catholic families to support the Church. You will discover before you are married that there are fees for almost everything. Later your children will not be baptized, confirmed, married, buried, or anything else without paying for it. You will be asked to pay a fee for the very document on which you sign away your children's spiritual freedom and your right to instruct them in religious faith.

The matter of birth control is important in the age in which we live. Under no conditions will the Roman Church justify the use of birth control. The Church, like Caesar's armies, needs men and supporters. It will not matter how financially unable you might become to support a growing family, nor how unfit physically your wife might be for motherhood, you will be required by the Church either to abstain from

HONEST ANSWERS TO HONEST QUESTIONS

all sex relations or take the chance of parenthood again. This is partly because the Roman Catholic Church practices birth control on a wide scale. Its host of monks, nuns, and priests completely thwart nature in so far as helping to reproduce the race is concerned.

The people who decide that the rest of us shall not practice birth control are old men who have never married; as unfit a group to deal with this problem as one could gather together.

Practically all Protestant churches, including the Protestant Episcopal Church, as well as such groups as the American Medical Association, League of Women Voters, National Federation of Women's Clubs, and numerous educational and scientific groups favor intelligent birth control education. The healthiest and economically highest groups in Europe teach it as part of the state educational system.

But it is not alone on the grounds of health and sanity that I attack the Roman Catholic position; I judge it as an unmoral attitude toward sex. It makes the sex act an animal function for the reproduction of the species. It asserts that sex relations for any other purpose are immoral. I affirm that such an attitude is *immoral*. The sex life in men and women is a far different thing from that in animals. Animals follow only blind instinct and the sex act is for the reproduction of the species. In men and women it is a high and spiritual expression of a psychic union above and beyond the act of mere reproduction. It is by no means limited to an animal function by which children are conceived.

Moreover, only wanted children ought to be born in our world today. Decent food, adequate clothing, the right to an education ought to be part of the heritage of every American child. And beyond that is the

PROTESTANT-CATHOLIC MARRIAGE

mother's health, and her mental preparedness for motherhood. This is of supreme importance. The right spacing of children is part of the moral code of intelligent men and women in America today.

Of course thousands of intelligent Catholic families do practice birth control. All one needs to do is to study birth statistics to know this to be true. Every child born in America today has a right to be conceived in love and hope, welcome because the mother is physically and spiritually prepared for the holy sacrament of motherhood. And that is not always possible.

Ask your young lady what her ideas are on this most important matter. You have a right to know before you enter on a life together in which the health and happiness of your wife and children are involved.

Keep in mind that the Roman Catholic Church will not consent to divorce save for the cause of proved infidelity. No matter how incompatible, how cruel, vulgar, or selfish the partner may prove, the marriage bonds must hold.

Then there are other aspects of this problem to which you need to give thought. I happen to know that you were deeply in sympathy with the people in Spain in their futile struggle to oppose the rebel Franco with his hordes of Africans, Germans, and Italians. Surely, you know where the Roman Catholic Church stood in regard to Spain's torture. And you know where it stood in regard to Mussolini's brutal and cruel rape of Ethiopia. There is something in this ideology which you need to consider before you take your final step and make an irrevocable decision.

I know of happy and successful marriages between Catholics and non-Catholics. They all fall within one of four categories. First: the non-Catholic joined the Roman Catholic Church and professed conversion.

HONEST ANSWERS TO HONEST QUESTIONS

Second: the Catholic abandoned the Roman Church and, either joined a Protestant church or gave up any outward allegiance to a church. Third: neither of the persons concerned cared about religion from the church point of view and paid no attention to the vows they made to the Church. In most of these cases they were married in the Roman Catholic Church solely because of pressure from the Catholic family of the girl. Fourth: the non-Catholic partner had little use for religion in any form and was willing that the other bring up the children according to Catholic doctrines. In several cases the couple have never been married by a priest, which means that from the point of view of the Catholic Church they are "living in sin," at least the Catholic member of that union is.

If you do not come under one of these four categories, my advice is that you had better do some very clear thinking before taking a step which may lead you both into endless argument and great unhappiness of mind.

IS AMERICA A CHRISTIAN NATION?

SEVERAL years before the first World War I attended a conference of Christian students, who had met to learn something of the needs of non-Christian lands. Over the platform hung a map of the world; on that map America, Great Britain, Germany, and one or two other favored countries, were pictured in white. France, Italy, Austria and the other Roman Catholic countries, were in red. The Moslem lands were painted green, the battle color of Islam. But by far the greater portion of that map was in the inky black of heathendom—the vast continent of Africa, all of China, Mongolia, Siberia, India, Siam and Japan, all in heathen blackness. We stood and sang with great fervor, “O Zion haste, thy mission high fulfilling.” *We* were Zion! Another hymn sung with much enthusiasm was, “*We’ve* a story to tell to the nations, that will lead *their* souls to the light.”

That sort of attitude was tolerated in those balmy pre-war days, but since then we have learned many sad lessons. We do not feel quite so justified in picturing ourselves all in spotless white and looking with sorrow upon the blackness of our heathen brothers. The nations responsible for engulfing the world in blood, in which over ten million young men were slaughtered and millions of helpless women and children starved to death, were the nations we had painted white on that map. The nation which has produced the most fearless leadership against war is India, which we painted in black. A glance at the papers tells us of

HONEST ANSWERS TO HONEST QUESTIONS

starvation among thousands of our miners and their families in the coal fields of Pennsylvania and Colorado, of oil scandals among our cabinet members and leading politicians at Washington, of gangs shooting each other down in the streets of our great cities, and of our marines killing people in Central America. We read of the utter disregard for law and we hesitate to tell the rest of the world that we are "Zion," prepared to "lead their souls to the light."

We have looked with horror on the atrocities and massacres of the Turk in Asia Minor, but do we know that no country in the world has such a record for lynchings as have we? We burn men, and even women, to death in our cities and our lynching record is stained with cruelty that would make even a Turk shudder. Our record shows that we use seventeen times as many ounces per person of narcotics and drugs as "opium-soaked China."

We pride ourselves on our "democracy" and think of India as the land of "caste." Yet there is no country in the world where race prejudice is so alive and cruel as in this United States. Recently a scholarship for two years' study in Paris was offered to the person who submitted the finest pieces of original work in sculpture in New York. The committee of award unanimously chose the work of a certain contestant. It was discovered that the winner was a young colored woman. The committee refused to permit her to accept the award merely because of her race. We carry our color prejudice even into the realms of art and education. Look at the disgraceful affair in Gary recently, where a mob of students in the high school filled with race prejudice against the few Negro students, beat the school committee and principal into forcing the colored students from the high school. Yet many of those

IS AMERICA A CHRISTIAN NATION?

students were themselves the children of recent immigrants, who had found opportunity in America. The colored children were the descendants of men and women who had been in this country since its earliest days. Many of our leading colleges and churches will not permit a Negro to have any share in their opportunities. Our "caste system" is as cruel, as unchristian, as pagan, as anything in India.

All the old talk about the battle line of Christ out on the *foreign field*, of the trenches of Christendom in heathen lands, no longer holds good. The battle line in the fight for Christ *runs right through the center of America*. The call for earnest Christian young men and women rings strong from a thousand quarters of our own land. We are not white and those other lands black. We are all in the shadow together. We must no longer see with the eyes of the Pharisee and pray his prayer, but we too must join the sinner on his knees, scarce lifting our eyes to heaven.

Take our attitude toward war and militarism. Numbers of so-called "patriotic societies" are trying to suppress all free speech by those who are advocating peace and the reduction of large armaments. In many of our schools compulsory military training forces the goose step on our boys.

In spite of the bewilderment left by the war and its horrible revelations; in spite of the vanishing vision of a new heaven and a new earth, in this present terrible renewal of slaughter, never in all history have some things stood out more clearly than they do today in the life of America. And somehow these center for us around two names—the two names which are beloved by all those whose ideals still contain reality and truth and for whom hope is not yet dead.

Somehow, whether it be justified or not, these two

HONEST ANSWERS TO HONEST QUESTIONS

names are associated close together in the minds of men, and these names are *America* and *Jesus*. America, more than any other nation in the history of humanity, has been built around the ideal of human brotherhood and equality for all. The blood of countless peoples flows through our veins. We are justly proud that many folk have landed on our shores ignorant and in poverty, and have been given the opportunity to rise to splendid heights and render noble service. Here we have given refuge to multitudes fleeing from persecution of Czar and Sultan, from the pogroms of Russia and the massacres of the Moslem. Here men may worship God according to their consciences. Our fathers saw this ideal of brotherhood afar off and but dimly. They talked of "freedom" and held slaves; they suffered for religious liberty and often denied it to others. But little by little the vision grew clearer and they were in dead earnest. At the heart of the ideal lies the message and life of Jesus. He gave his life for world brotherhood and that men might have life and have it more abundantly. No other ideal can solve the world's outstanding problems.

In our fathers' day Lincoln arose and in one ringing sentence focused their thought on what forever after has become an undisputed truth in the minds of all clear-thinking Americans. He said, "This country can no longer remain half slave and half free." Does that not need to be repeated today? Do we not see it? Have not the graves of millions of young men slaughtered on the battlefields, of women and children starved or massacred in the war days, have these not cried aloud in our ears, "You cannot remain half slave and half free"—half of us sneering at the other half; half of us looking down on the other half; half of us enjoying what the sweat and blood and tears of the other

IS AMERICA A CHRISTIAN NATION?

half make possible for us? Class and race prejudice, national and international selfishness and false pride—these must go if we are to build the ideal for which the world is praying; a brotherhood where the spirit of Jesus becomes a reality. If we cannot do this in America, where in the world can it be done?

Who save Jesus can lead us to such an understanding? His ideal of brotherhood *shuts no one out*. But no one who has given much thought to this ideal believes it can become a reality apart from a spiritual awakening. The curse of America today is our materialism. We estimate values in terms of size and speed and money. "Bigger and better," for us means, "larger and faster." We can talk with London and Paris and Berlin over the radio, but have we anything worth saying? We can travel four hundred miles an hour through the air, but when we arrive have we anything to offer which will make life really *better*? We are certainly "on our way," but where are we going? *Do we know the goal?*

The other day I saw in a magazine one of those picture puzzles for children. There in the picture was a ship sailing on an ocean. Underneath were the words: "Here is a ship. Find the captain." Search as I might I could not at first find the captain. I turned the picture to the right and to the left, upside down and at angles. Then suddenly I saw the captain. After that it seemed impossible *not* to see him. His sturdy face and cap stood out in the picture as a flag against a blue sky. So Christ comes into this modern world of ours with all its seeming chaos. How often it seems a ship without a captain, sailing swiftly onward—but whither? Then for some of us Christ comes and touches the picture. He says, "*There is God, your Heavenly Father—loving, caring, struggling; my Father and your Father.*" The ship *has* a Captain. We see

HONEST ANSWERS TO HONEST QUESTIONS

the goal. That goal is human brotherhood in the spirit of Christ. Wars are banished, for no man can hate another when that spirit enters his heart; class and race prejudice end as the Christlike vision of one another comes into the mind; courage to make the dream a reality strengthens those who discover through Jesus that God is at the heart of things, and that his power and love are available to all who will let him work through them for the ideal.

We take down that map from the wall, for we are not all white and those brothers of ours all black. With new conviction we go out to face the challenge of a battle line which runs *around the world*. There is "a message to tell to the nations, that will bring their souls to the light." It is the message of Jesus. We need to begin proving that his message will work, by living it here and now. *There is no use in trying something on others which we have failed to put in practice ourselves.*

WHAT SHALL WE DO ON SUNDAY?

Must It Be Different From Other Days?

WHY NOT ask the question, How shall we spend our Saturday; must it be different from other days? From ten thousand, yea, many times that number of young people I hear a mighty chorus rise. What is that united voice saying? Let us listen. "Certainly Saturday must be different? What do you think? Think we want to go to school *every day*? Say, where would our athletics, our recreation, our good times come in? Make Saturday like Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday? *Not if we have any say in the matter!* It would take the joy-end out of the week."

I agree with you. I believe that we need a play time, a time for recreation, for fun, for release from the classroom or the daily routine. I believe it is part of God's own law that our minds and bodies should have a period of rest and recreation.

But we are more than simply marvelous machines contrived for doing work. We have values in our personalities, with power to think, enjoy, and love. If we wear out our bodies, we break down the possibility of efficient service in which our personalities might express themselves through acts and deeds of fine helpfulness to our fellows. There come times when such sacrifice of body and mind in a short space of time is called for, and which a brave man or woman will gladly offer, but most of us will render higher, finer service by conserving our strength.

HONEST ANSWERS TO HONEST QUESTIONS

If then, we need recreation and play, rest and change, to perfect this wonderful machine, which we call our physical body, in order more efficiently to make use of those higher powers of thought, purpose, will, and love, is it not fair to ask whether the athletic field, the playground, the picnic is an adequate means of building *the life of the spirit*? We are not merely bodies, but immortal spirits. We are simply *using* these bodies for a few years of earthly life. And, so we claim as Christians, one might build a perfect physical body, become the strongest man in the world, the most beautiful woman, but if the life of the spirit was starved and turned into evil paths, then that life would become a failure and a tragedy.

The finest kind of rest is the rest of the spirit, that inner peace which comes from fellowship with hidden sources of spiritual power. Turn to the great poems of our race, to the beautiful hymns of the Christian faith and you will discover what I mean.

"O Sabbath rest by Galilee!
O calm of hills above!
Where Jesus knelt to share with thee
The silence of eternity,
Interpreted by love.

"Drop thy still dews of quietness,
Till all our strivings cease;
Take from our souls the strain and stress,
And let our ordered lives confess
The beauty of thy peace."

Christians have set aside one day each week especially for the purpose of building up the spiritual side of our lives, flooding our souls with God's peace. Worship is an endeavor to come into real relationship with God. It is this fellowship with God that feeds the life of the spirit.

WHAT SHALL WE DO ON SUNDAY?

Now someone will say, "But I can worship God out in the woods or in a tramp through the country, such as I take on Saturday." It is true that out amid scenes of beauty, the works of God's hands, we do come into fellowship with him, if our spirits are reverent and open to the spiritual in nature around us. But I know that the life of the spirit through the ages has been strengthened and renewed through people meeting together as members of God's family for prayer and worship. It is such worship in the lives of most of us that taught us the *meaning* of that spiritual presence we discover about us in nature. If the worship of the church were to cease, men would soon lose the sense of God's presence in nature.

True worship rests our spirits as nothing else can, for it brings us in touch with something so much vaster, stronger, better, and holier than we are that we forget our petty problems in the abiding presence of God. We go forth strengthened to new tasks, we catch new visions, we dedicate our wills and our affections to higher ends, and our wounds and failures are healed and left behind.

All the popular songs ever sung, all the melodies ever played cannot compare with the great hymns we sing in the church. When we join with a company of others in such hymns as "Elect from every nation, yet one o'er all the earth," or "Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love," we know that we need to worship in common at times to catch the full significance of our faith. One who never *shares* in worship has missed the deeper meaning of Christian fellowship.

I rejoice, therefore, that there is one day in the week different from other days, a day when we can go to the house of God and share together in worship, in refresh-

HONEST ANSWERS TO HONEST QUESTIONS

ing the spiritual powers of life. I look forward to Sunday; I did all through childhood. It is the most beautiful day in the week, because it brings me nearer to the best things that a human life can share in fellowship.

To make this day possible for others there are many things we ought to be glad to do without. I am glad that the stores can be closed and the factories shut down, that there is no general mail delivered and fewer trains run. It means that others are having the chance to refresh their bodies and spirits.

But Sunday ought not to be a day of restrictions that make it an unpleasant day for young men and women and children. To most of you who read this book Saturday is a day of recreation and play, but this is not true for multitudes. Saturday is also a day of work in store and factory.

I see no reason why a young man shut up six days in the week in a factory should not have a chance one day in the week to get out in the open country and even on the ball field. If he remembers that he is a spirit and refreshes his spiritual needs on the day set aside for worship by going with others to the house of prayer in the morning, I am certain myself that Jesus would bless such a young man if he took the afternoon for some healthy recreation, even such as a good ball game or a game of golf.

The main thing to keep before us is this, that to make Sunday *merely* a day for physical recreation, and starve the life of the spirit, is to warp the highest part of our personality. Never to set aside a time when we share with our loved ones, our friends, our community, our nation, the world, in worship and praise, in prayer, and meditation is to lose our share in the fellowship of the great family of God. On the other hand, to

WHAT SHALL WE DO ON SUNDAY?

make of Sunday a day merely for the observing of narrow Puritanical customs is to do to that blessed day of rest just what the Pharisees did to the Sabbath in Jesus' day and which aroused his indignation. He refused to keep their narrow laws about the Sabbath, and they hated him for it. He went to the synagogue on the Sabbath, but he also walked in the fields with his disciples.

One other purpose which our Sunday ought to serve is to unite the life of the family. In the rush of our modern world the family life in the average American home is being broken down. The father is often a stranger to the younger children, so seldom through the week is the family together. Sunday offers us a chance to renew the ties that bind us to the home. To go together as a family to church, to sing together around the piano well-loved hymns, to revive at least on this one day the fast-disappearing custom of family prayers that once was a strength and source of power in the development of character in the American home—all these experiences shared will deepen and enrich the life of your home and the spirits of all in your family circle. Try it out next Sunday. Ask father and mother to co-operate. See how it works. Spend the afternoon together, out in the country or around the fire. Close the day with mother playing hymns, while everyone has a chance to choose the one he or she loves best, as all join together in singing. The years when you will be together as a family with mother playing at the piano will soon fly away, you will be scattered far and wide. The memory of those Sundays will be a blessed part of your life.

I close with Theodore Roosevelt's nine reasons for going to church:

1. In this actual world a churchless community, a community where men have abandoned and scoffed

HONEST ANSWERS TO HONEST QUESTIONS

at or ignored their religious needs, is a community on the rapid downgrade.

2. Church work and church attendance mean the cultivation of the habit of feeling some responsibility for others.

3. There are enough holidays for most of us. Sundays differ from other holidays in the fact that there are fifty-two of them every year. Therefore on Sundays go to church.

4. Yes, I know all the excuses. I know that one can worship the Creator in a grove of trees, or by a running brook, or in a man's own house just as well as in a church. But I also know as a matter of cold fact the average man does not thus worship.

5. He may not hear a good sermon at church. He will hear a sermon by a good man who, with his good wife, is engaged all the week in making hard lives a little easier.

6. He will listen to and take part in reading some beautiful passages from the Bible. And if he is not familiar with the Bible, he has suffered a loss.

7. He will take part in singing good hymns.

8. He will meet and nod or speak to good, quiet neighbors. He will come away feeling a little more charitable toward all the world, even toward those excessively foolish young men who regard churchgoing as a soft performance.

9. I advocate a man's joining in church work for the sake of showing his faith by his works.

HOW MUCH OUGHT A CHRISTIAN TO SPEND ON HIMSELF?

Is It Right to Grow Rich in a Poor World?

MARY CARVER was in her first year at high school when her father died. Mary was the oldest of four children, and the only income of the family was the weekly wage of the father. When John Carver died, Mary's mother was left with a debt of two hundred dollars, mostly in doctors' bills, and the support of her four children.

Mary left high school and went to work in the "Five-and-Ten." Her brother Jack, aged twelve, got a job out of school hours with a local grocery store. Mrs. Carver took in washing, and Helen and George, the ten-year-old twins, helped collect and deliver the laundry for their mother, did odd jobs now and then, and kept on with their school. The Carvers moved into a cheaper tenement in a less attractive part of the town.

Till her father died Mary had worn silk stockings, pretty dresses, and new hats, and went frequently to parties. Suddenly all this came to an end. At first she had been glad to help her heroic mother and rejoiced that she could share in meeting the family expenses. But the work at the store was hard, and often on Saturday night Mary was too tired to think, much less play, and a feeling of discontent and bitterness rose in her heart. Her former schoolmates had gone on to a higher class, and Mary no longer received invitations to parties, because she could not dress in the expensive way that the other girls in her old crowd

HONEST ANSWERS TO HONEST QUESTIONS

at school felt was necessary. Her old friends would still nod to her when they came laughing into the "Five-and-Ten" to make a purchase, but Mary was sure that they pitied her and looked down upon her socially.

On Easter Day came an experience which was hard to endure, but which Mary felt in after years was the great turning point in her outlook on life. Always she had worn a new hat and dress to church on Easter. This Easter, with the rent already overdue, the twins in desperate need of shoes, and a dentist bill to pay, there could be no thought of a new dress or hat.

In the church-school class the other girls were admiring each others' new clothes when Mary, already sensitive about her clothes overheard a whispered remark: "You would think her mother would be *ashamed* to have her seen in such old things, but then she's *only a poor working girl now*." That afternoon in her room Mary had a good cry. Everything was so *unfair*; why could some girls have pretty clothes, new hats, silk stockings, and others struggle with poverty all the time! Why could some girls go on with their education, go through college and have *everything*, while others who had to work and scrimp and save were deprived of even a high-school training! *It wasn't fair!*

On her table lay a silver dollar, part of her weekly wage, which Mary turned over to her mother each week. She picked up the piece of silver and looked at it. The words "In God We Trust" struck her like a blow. What a mockery! Money was the last place on which to write anything about God. God, she had been taught, and had believed, united us in love as one family; money, she was coming to see, divided us, even in the church, into groups, social classes, erecting barriers like iron gates between us.

Suddenly Mary thought of herself as she had been.

CHRISTIAN SPENDING

She too had been thoughtless and careless in the use of money. She had spent money freely, never thinking that other girls were deprived of the things that she had in abundance. Poverty was teaching her to think of others; as a worker she was learning to understand others in need. She thought of Nellie Casey, who worked beside her at the counter all day. Nellie was supporting an invalid mother. Nellie looked half-starved. The miserable wages paid the girls in the "Five-and-Ten" were not sufficient for food and clothing, rent, and light, to say nothing of doctors' bills. And Mary knew that Nellie starved herself to buy little delicacies for her mother. Yet how cheerful, at least most of the time, Nellie was! Mary's indignation rose at the thought that anyone could look down on Nellie, just because she happened to be "a poor working girl."

Jack and Mary came closer to each other in these days. Jack was determined to go on with his schooling, yet he would not shirk his responsibility in helping support the family. He covered a paper route early in the morning, worked in the grocery store afternoons, evenings, and on Saturday. He was meeting other boys who were working for a living or to help support their homes, some of them in much harder circumstances than the Carvers. As Jack said to Mary one evening, "I never knew how many kids in this town were up against it till I went to work."

Then Mary put her finger on her strongest quality, her will, and *resolved*. She resolved to study more about this problem of poverty and wealth, of how folks spent their money, of what Jesus had to say about the use of money, and some day she might help make things fairer for some other girls. She enlisted Jack in this study and they began to get books from the

HONEST ANSWERS TO HONEST QUESTIONS

public library which told them much which astonished them.

Jack and Mary found out that the number of people in the United States who are struggling with poverty is much greater than is supposed. They discovered that a few families have an enormous amount of wealth, about 500 families owning as much as twenty millions of dollars each. About 5,000 families have as much as one hundred thousand dollars a year to spend and 625,800 families have five thousand dollars a year. On the other hand, they read that more than half of the men who have families to support in the United States receive less than one thousand five hundred dollars.

One book that Jack brought home told about the children who have to work. There are more than a million children fifteen years and under who are working outside the home in America. Jack and Mary came to know about the wretched conditions in which great multitudes of people live in factory and mining towns, where in some cases the workers were little better than slaves, the big companies owning the homes, the stores, the places of amusement, even the churches of the workers, and permitting no organization among the workers whatsoever. These young people knew themselves by this time something of the dehumanizing monotony of some kinds of work. Here is an extract from a book which Jack was reading to Mary: "Thousands of workers perform the same movement countless times a day. An observer tells of a woman whose only task is to take a half-formed hinge and place it in the bending machine fifty times a minute, or thirty thousand times a day. Another worker cuts out tin-can tops by pressing a foot-lever forty times a minute." So thousands upon thousands spend their days, their months, their years, their lives.

CHRISTIAN SPENDING

Mary was making a special study of living conditions among the working class. Since they had moved into the poorer quarter of the city she had begun to notice many things. She noticed that the city government did not take as good care of the streets, did not remove the rubbish as quickly as in the better parts of the city. She learned that one third of the people in our country are living under poor housing conditions, conditions which fall below the standard of health and decency, and about one tenth are living under conditions which are an acute menace to health, morals, and family life. The descriptions of crowded rooms, dark tenements, lacking sanitary improvements, numberless cellar and basement dwellings where little children were born and forced to live made her sick.

Beside them on the table was the evening paper which Jack picked up. There was an account of a football game and the paper gave an estimate of the amount of money spent by the students in a local university on this one game. The tickets had been five dollars apiece and eighty thousand had been sold. The paper went on to estimate what the students had spent in carfares, autos, meals, flowers, and shows in connection with the game. Then it took up the amount of money represented in the expensive fur coats worn. The sum for that afternoon's *fun* went up into hundreds of thousands of dollars—with little children half-clad and at the point of starvation in the same city where the game was played. "Is it right; is it Christian?" Mary asked. "To spend millions of dollars on luxuries, chewing gum, games, perfumes, fur coats, rouge, tobacco, movies, while thousands slave—is it right?" So Mary exclaimed. Her own contact with poverty was waking her up. Day by day the unfairness seemed to grow upon her, and slowly but surely she

HONEST ANSWERS TO HONEST QUESTIONS

was forming a purpose to make an effort to change these conditions if ever the chance came her way.

Three years after the death of Mary's father her mother married again and the financial condition of the family was changed. Mr. Watson, Mary's stepfather, was a man of considerable wealth and a man of fine Christian principle. Mary went back to high school, two years behind her old class but more mature in thought and experience than any of them. Jack was in his sister's class now, and together they began to practice some of the things they had come to believe about the use of money. They started in to reduce the standard of luxury among the young people in the school. They insisted on dressing simply and refused to spend money on luxuries. They started a lot of discussion, but by the close of the year they had awakened so much serious thought that the senior class voted to limit the cost of their dance, the amount to be spent on clothes for graduation, and the cost of the class ring, to a figure that would not make the members of the class who were not well to do uncomfortable and their parents unhappy because of the high price of graduation.

Mary was now able to take up this problem seriously in her class at church school and in the Young People's Society at the church. She asked them to face the question as to what Jesus would have them do in a world where there was so much poverty. There were girls and boys in the church who were making their fathers and mothers miserable in their constant demand for high-priced clothes and spending money for amusements, for dances, for luxuries.

Jack and Mary had brought into the church numbers of young people they had come to know in their working days, and they wanted these young people to feel

CHRISTIAN SPENDING

at home. Mary told the class that being a Christian meant that we ought not to dress in such a way as to make others uncomfortable and unhappy because they could not afford to dress expensively. She urged that democracy and the spirit of Jesus meant that we ought to break down the class feeling which money raised. She remembered her own misery that Easter morning three years ago. One way to obliterate these class lines was to dress simply and inexpensively, to refuse to bend to the demand of the world to show off in expensive clothes and in the reckless expenditure of money. Jack and Mary began giving of their money to help mothers take their children to the country in the summer, to aid fresh-air homes, the Near East Relief, and other methods of helping those in poverty. It was a satisfaction to Jack and Mary to discover how many of their friends began to think more seriously on these things, so that even the older people in the church began to raise the question as to whether following Christ didn't involve a simpler standard of living.

Now Jack and Mary plan to earn part of their way through college, and to fit themselves to be of some service where they can help bring more abundant life to those in poverty.

IS INTERNATIONALISM UNPATRIOTIC?

WE ARE living in an age when millions of young men are being driven to the slaughter of their fellows by this creed of race and nationalism. It has been preached as the supreme truth in Germany and in Italy, but no nation is free from this philosophy. Harry Emerson Fosdick calls it "Christianity's Supreme Rival." And it is exactly that. It divides men on false and narrow lines into hostile camps, each set on the destruction of the other. It lays homes and cities waste, as in Poland, China, Czechoslovakia, and now all central Europe. It breeds hatreds and cruelty and violence.

The kingdom of God is built on love, fellowship, co-operation, brotherhood. Dare we believe that the spiritual forces of God are ultimately stronger than the terrible forces a Hitler can let loose upon the world?

At the top of the editorial column of one of America's leading newspapers was printed for many years this statement: "Our country, in her intercourse with foreign nations may she always be in the right, but our country, right or wrong." This is the heart of *nationalism*. Nationalism asserts that we must put our own country first in every thought, word, and deed, no matter whether our country be right or wrong. If you believe in nationalism, you must want your country to win in any struggle, no matter how wrong your country may be. If your country is trying, even by unfair means to get control of resources and lands

IS INTERNATIONALISM UNPATRIOTIC?

to which she has no right, you must stand up for your country right or wrong. A true nationalist must believe that no other people can compare with the people of his own nation, that no others can fight as bravely, think as clearly, produce as many great men, and that no other nation ever has been or ever can be as great as his country. This idea is held by many thousands of people in America today, it is taught in countless schoolrooms, and is even urged in sermons from the pulpit. Many groups even believe it is *unpatriotic* to hold an *international* point of view. What is *internationalism*?

At the top of another paper printed for years in America were these words: "My Country is the World—My Countrymen are all Mankind." This is the heart of *internationalism*. Internationalism asserts that we must put *humanity* above our own nation, that we must think of what is right *for all mankind*, and that we must take our stand for whatever will make a *better world*, even though we may have to oppose our own country. If a government ordered its armies to invade another land, a nationalist would say, "Right or wrong, my country orders me to invade this other land and I will do as my government orders." A person who thought in international terms, and who decided that this invasion was utterly wrong, a crime against humanity, might say, if he had the courage of his convictions, "I cannot take part in something so utterly wrong, so terrible a betrayal of humanity." He might be sent to prison, he might be shot. Many have taken such a stand and have suffered for it. In our own country a few men who believed that war was a crime against humanity and against the spirit and teachings of Jesus, refused to take part in the World War. They were sent to prison for long years and suffered cruel

HONEST ANSWERS TO HONEST QUESTIONS

treatment. They put what to them was the good of all humanity above everything else. This is *internationalism*. Is internationalism *unpatriotic*?

That depends on what your idea of patriotism is. Let me give you some illustrations to think about. I do not purpose to answer this question; I only hope to start you thinking about what the right answer ought to be. Perhaps you can debate this question in your class or school.

The paper on which these words, "My Country is the World—My Countrymen are all Mankind," were printed, was *The Liberator*, and the man who put them there was William Lloyd Garrison. In Boston, on Commonwealth Avenue, is a beautiful monument to Garrison, and those words are carved on the marble. But when Garrison published *The Liberator* the people of Boston broke up his presses, stoned him in the streets, and many wanted to kill him. Slavery was an institution protected by the laws of the country, a source for financial help to thousands of Americans. Garrison believed it was wrong, he felt as keen a sense of brotherhood for the African slave as for his New England relations. He took his stand against the country on the side of humanity. *Was he unpatriotic?* He was an internationalist. Are good Americans ashamed that William Lloyd Garrison was an American? You will find his monument in many cities; his name in all our history books. Did he love America or did he hate America when he tried to awaken the conscience of his country to the evil and the shame of the slave trade? Was he a less worthy citizen of our country because, in the face of persecution, he put humanity and the world above loyalty to one country or to one nation?

Chile and Argentina are states in South America.

IS INTERNATIONALISM UNPATRIOTIC?

Their borderlines run for many miles side by side. Some years ago there arose a dispute over this borderline. The nationalists in Chile claimed that the line was not correct, that Argentina had land that belonged to Chile. Nationalists in Argentina declared that this was false. The nationalists on both sides were ready to plunge the nations into war. Bishop Benavente, of Argentina, was an internationalist. While his government and the army leaders were crying out that all good Argentines must now hate everyone in Chile and be ready to kill them rather than give up one foot of land, this bishop thought of the mothers in Chile, the little children, as well as those in his own country. He thought in *international terms*. With great courage, for many at once denounced him as a traitor, he appealed to the people of both countries to talk the matter over, to arbitrate rather than go to war. He dared to say, "My country may be wrong in this matter; let us find out where the real answer lies; let us see who is wrong. Let us," said he, "not think of our own nation but of justice." A nationalist would call this "unpatriotic." The bishop should have put his country first, *right or wrong*.

At the top of the Andes Mountains on the borderline between Chile and Argentina, there stands today a wonderful statue known as the Christ of the Andes. It was set up by the people of both countries in celebration of the response to Bishop Benavente's plea. War was averted. The statue was cast from the melted cannon of both countries. Men and women and children of both nations camped together at the borderline and at sunrise unveiled the statue while the good bishop offered prayer for both countries and for the peace of the world. It was the prayer of an internationalist. Had he been a nationalist, the nations

HONEST ANSWERS TO HONEST QUESTIONS

would have been at war over some few miles of territory, men would have been killing each other, mothers would have been weeping for their sons, wives for their husbands, children for their dead fathers. The bishop would have been praying God to bless the soldiers of his own land and asking that they be given power to kill more of the enemy than the enemy was able to kill of them.

At sunrise, instead of the sound of bursting shells and the cursing of men in bayonet attack, there floated over the valley music and singing as the children of both countries joined hands. The inscription on the statue is this:

"These mountains will crumble into dust sooner than the people of the Argentine and of Chile will break the peace which at the feet of Christ, the Redeemer, they have given their word to keep."

There are no monuments to generals who led their troops to slaughter in this war that might have been fought; there is the Christ of the Andes. Bishop Benavente was an internationalist. Would you say he was *unpatriotic*?

The first sermon that Jesus ever preached had to do with nationalism. Do not let me influence you by telling you what I think Jesus said. Read it for yourself. It is in Luke 4. 16-30. Why were the Jews in the synagogue angry? Was Zarephath a Jewish city? Did the Jews like the Syrians? What people did the Jews believe to be the favored of God, the "chosen people"? Was Jesus "unpatriotic"? If Jesus were to be born in America today, an American boy, which newspapers would he like the most, the one with "My Country, Right or Wrong," on its front page, or the one which printed, "My Country is the World—My Countrymen are all Mankind"?

IS INTERNATIONALISM UNPATRIOTIC?

MY PRAYER

Who is so low that I am not his brother?

Who is so high that I've no path to him?

Who is so poor I may not feel his hunger?

Who is so rich I may not pity him?

Who is so hurt I may not know his heartache?

Who sings for joy my heart may never share?

Who in God's heaven has passed beyond my vision?

Who to Hell's depths where I may never fare?

May none, then, call on me for understanding,

May none, then, turn to me for help in pain,

And drain alone his bitter cup of sorrow,

Or find he knocks upon my heart in vain.

(S. Ralph Harlow.)

IS DEMOCRACY PRACTICAL?

ACROSS the world there is sweeping a fierce and contagious fire. It is called by various names: dictatorship, Fascism, Nazism, totalitarianism; but in each and every form it scorns democracy and declares that in the present world democracy will not work.

Here, in America, we still laud and praise democracy. That word rings in sermons from a thousand pulpits and in the lectures of college professors, and is proclaimed by our statesmen, business leaders, and the people in city and hamlet. It is sung by school children and voiced in prose and verse across the land. Is democracy practical? Will it work?

On Lincoln's Birthday I stood at the entrance of that most beautiful of all shrines in Washington, the Lincoln Memorial. There in his great marble chair sits the President we honor, loved in the hearts of his countrymen. For us Abraham Lincoln is the symbol and the very incarnation of the ideal of democracy—"government of the people, by the people, for the people."

Patriotic and military organizations had placed wreaths in tribute at the foot of the statue. Looking into those sad eyes of Lincoln, which seem to gaze far off across the city, one wonders what he would say to us in so tragic an hour, when democracy seems shaken to its foundations, and the wild lust of dictators for power marches onward to new conquests.

On the previous day Mrs. Roosevelt, the President's wife, had been speaking at a great gathering in Phila-

IS DEMOCRACY PRACTICAL?

delphia in honor of Lincoln. Among other things Mrs. Roosevelt had said, "Abraham Lincoln took only the first step toward freedom. His Proclamation declared that slavery would no longer be tolerated. But that declaration was only an ideal, not a fact. We do tolerate slavery in different ways, and it is not only the people of one race who are slaves today. Slavery is of many different kinds. Today we are facing an era in which we have to make certain things become facts rather than theories. We are getting to the point where we are going to insist that all human beings have certain basic rights in modern civilization—that all should be equal before the law, that there should be no discrimination in citizenship rights, and that all should have the same opportunities for economic and educational advantages."

This is democracy of which the wife of the President is speaking, and they are brave words. I am persuaded that Abraham Lincoln would have uttered a loud "Amen" had he heard them. Because with the youth of this land lies the future of America and the hope which Mrs. Roosevelt holds in her heart, it is important that you should know what lies back of her statements. For if democracy is to survive, the kind to which Lincoln dedicated his life, then this vision must be translated into reality in our national life.

From the Lincoln Memorial I walked over to the great palace of marble where the Supreme Court of the United States sits in black-robed majesty. Over the portals is carved in large letters "Equality Before the Law." From the steps of the Supreme Court I could see another large building, where musical concerts are held. I knew that no Negro citizen can attend those concerts. When Roland Hayes, the great singer, last sang in that building, the students of the

HONEST ANSWERS TO HONEST QUESTIONS

Music School of Howard University asked that they might attend and hear this artist of their race. They were told that as a special concession they might climb a dark back fire escape and enter a window at the top, where they could sit in the darkness of the back gallery. Of course no self-respecting American Negro student would accept under such humiliating condition, such condition as Hitler might place upon Negroes or Jews in Nazi Germany. They did not hear Roland Hayes sing.

Mr. H. G. Wells, the noted British writer, has put this statement in one of his books: "There is no more evil thing in this present world than race prejudice, none at all! I write deliberately—it is the worst single thing in life now. It justifies and holds together more obscene cruelty and abomination than any other sort of error in the world." The philosophy of the Nazi and Fascist state is built around that error. But what of democratic America?

Recently I was in a city where two men had been driven from the town, one the minister of a church, the other the principle of a high school. Both of these men were educated, cultured, Christian citizens. They had committed no crime, they paid their taxes, they were law-abiding members of the community. What had they done to merit such treatment in a democracy? They had gone to the polls and tried to vote—and they were Negroes. "You can't vote here, get out." So great was the feeling aroused against them that the minister was asked to leave the city and the School Board dismissed the principal. Does democracy work? Is it practical?

Look at conditions in Washington, the proud capital of our democracy. No Negro can enter the restaurants of the city, no matter how hungry he may be,

IS DEMOCRACY PRACTICAL?

even though he has the money with which to pay for his meal. I know of only one exception and that is the restaurant in the railway station. Keep in mind the words of Mrs. Roosevelt about democracy—"the same opportunities for economic advancement must be available for all."

Since 1918 two hundred and forty white men have been added to the fire department of the city of Washington. Not a single Negro has been given an opportunity to join that force. Had the Negro population of Washington been given the same equal treatment at jobs in proportion to their numbers, they would have drawn \$593,598 in wages. There are only 38 Negroes on the police force of Washington today; that is four less than they had in 1928. Had the Negro citizens of our capital been given equality before the law in a chance to serve on the police force, more than 370 new Negro policemen would have been appointed. This in wages would have meant an increase of \$893,289 in the purchasing power of the Negro community. Yet you will be told in Washington that the Negro is shiftless and on relief rolls in larger numbers in proportion to the white population. Is it any wonder that such is the case?

Look for a moment at the schools of the country. Here is an extract from a letter from a former student of mine, now taking a Ph.D. at Yale. He is from Mississippi: "I am getting much information as to the Negro problem here in Mississippi. There are fifteen counties with 49,697 Negro children who should be in school for whom there are no high-school facilities at all. The salaries of the Negro teachers are practically the same today as they were forty-seven years ago. This state draws thousands of dollars from Federal relief funds on the basis of its Negro population, but

HONEST ANSWERS TO HONEST QUESTIONS

more than twenty-five per cent of those funds it uses for white education as well as all the funds it draws on the basis of the white population. I know of one county that spends only 28 per cent of the money they get because of the presence of Negro children on Negro education. There are 3,737 Negro schools in Mississippi. Of these, 2,309 are owned by public-school authorities, and 1,428 are owned privately. This means that 1,428 schools are housed in churches, tenant cabins, lodges, or any other type of building that may be available. The average annual salary paid a Negro teacher in a rural school in this state is \$125. The typical school term is 100 days. Of the 6,000 Negro teachers in the state, 3,000 are below college level in education."

Take another aspect of this problem. Dr. Arthur Raper, the research secretary of the Commission on Interracial Co-operation in Atlanta, Georgia, writes: "There are many conspicuous differences between white and Negro schools. One acquainted with the Black Belt communities can pick out the Negro schools by the appearance of their exteriors while riding along the road at fifty miles an hour. There are differences within quite as great. Few Negro pupils are given transportation, though thousands of white children receive this service. In fact, the number transported in 1928 was 69,526 and in 1934 it had jumped to 117,085. Since then it has gone steadily up. Not so the Negro pupils who need such service. The total amount spent for the transportation of Negro pupils in the entire state was much less than the sum utilized for the transportation of white children in two counties alone." Is this democracy?

In a New York City church a few Negro families had been taken into membership. The rector was

IS DEMOCRACY PRACTICAL?

seeking to practice the ideal of Jesus. From the clerk of the Vestry came the following letter:

"We have come to the conclusion that it is impossible to continue the work of the parish and maintain it as a white church while the present rector is in charge. He seems determined to admit colored members into the parish. I therefore offer a motion to ask the rector to resign; and if he fails to do so, to address a communication to the Bishop, asking for his removal. The Vestry is to consult a lawyer to draw up charges."

Is this Christian? Is it democracy?

Would the organizations which placed the wreathes at the foot of Lincoln's statue stand up and protest against such discrimination against American citizens of the Negro group? One of these organizations refused to let Miss Marian Anderson use its hall solely because she was a Negress. We can rejoice that Mrs. Roosevelt not only proclaims her belief in justice and in democracy, but she practices it. She resigned from that organization in protest, and Miss Anderson sang before a crowd of many thousands there in the open space before the Lincoln Memorial. I am certain Lincoln would have rejoiced in that tribute before his shrine.

It is so easy to substitute the worship of a person for loyalty to the ideal for which he stood. A boy or girl may praise his or her mother and tell how much they love her, yet refuse to live by the ideal that mother holds in her heart for them. This is democracy's worst and most subtle enemy today in our beloved land—the lip-service to democracy and the refusal to practice the ideal. Jesus saw this temptation as one of the most constant which his followers would meet, "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"

HONEST ANSWERS TO HONEST QUESTIONS

It is so easy to offer prayers, recite creeds, attend worship, and then betray the ideals to which Jesus has asked us to dedicate our lives as his followers.

Democracy and Christianity have much in common. Both stand for equality and justice, both are inclusive and universal, refusing to shut others out on the basis of race or color. Both aim to offer the fullest possible opportunity for highest self-expression in all that is high and good and noble to all men and all women.

Meanwhile we read of the injustice and cruelty which many minority groups are receiving in Europe from those who reject both democracy and Christianity. The cruel persecution of the Jews stands out in glaring light. We are glad we live in a democracy, but is our record clean when we consider how Jews are treated in America? What fraternity or sorority opens its doors to Jewish students? How many hotels close their doors against them? How difficult it is in many places in our country for Jewish young people to secure jobs!

When we turn to the economic order, we again raise the question, Is democracy practical? As Christians we may be sure that God does not approve of the inequality between great masses of people in this nation and the few whose wealth is counted in millions. The National Resources Commission report indicates that the poorest third of the American families and individuals receive no more of the total national income than was received by the richest one half of one per cent. In an editorial in the *New York Times* on September 3, 1938, we read: "The contrasts in income to which this report calls attention are really shocking." In a recent book dealing with the condition of the farmers I read: "In 1930 two million American farmers received no more for all the wheat and cotton pro-

IS DEMOCRACY PRACTICAL?

duced than was the total income, in 1929, of 513 wealthy individuals."

I have a great deal to do with young people, and I know how very difficult is life for many thousands of American boys and girls in this present social order. The last report of the American Youth Council states that "forty per cent of employable youth have been unable to find work. The depression has forced more than one and a half million young people who normally would have been married to postpone the step." And then one reads, "One eighth of the first admissions to state psychopathic hospitals are between the ages of 15 and 24."

Destitution, Disease, Demoralization, and Disintegration—those four horsemen of death and destruction wage savage warfare against multitudes of exploited people in our fair land today, because we are unwilling to practice the democracy we preach.

America still has an ideal, born of the passions that make for righteousness. That dream is not the one the boy in Germany or Italy is being taught; for it deals not with conquest by sword and machine gun, of blood and battles, of arrogant assertion of stupid and groundless claims to superiority because of blood or race—which exist only in the mind of dictators and have no scientific basis in fact—our dream is expressed in the words we love to sing,

"O beautiful for patriot dream
That sees beyond the years
Thine alabaster cities gleam
Undimmed by human tears!
Americal Americal!
God shed his grace on thee
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!"

HONEST ANSWERS TO HONEST QUESTIONS

Let those of us who love America and believe that democracy needs to be guarded and passed on to future generations resolve that we will not substitute worship for loyalty; that we will be of those who not only place our wreathes at the feet of Lincoln, but also seek with greater devotion to incarnate in our lives and in the life of America the ideal for which he stood and for which he gave the last full measure of devotion.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY "RELIGION"?

IN ASKING several hundred students to write out a definition of what they meant when they talked about religion, I have had a wide range of replies. Some of these are in conflict with others. Here are eight typical definitions given by young people:

1. Religion saves individuals from hell.
2. Religion helps men to overcome sin in their lives.
3. Religion is the chief source of strength by which we can live nobler lives in God's service.
4. Religion offers comfort in pain and gives men courage to meet life's disappointments.
5. Religion is the great integrating force in life.
6. Religion alone can help men to abolish war and race prejudice.
7. Religion will bring in the kingdom of God on earth.
8. Religion prepares men for the future life.

But there are many religions: Christianity, Moham-
medanism, Judaism, Buddhism, Shintoism, etc. How
is one to discover what true religion is? As Christians
we discover that we are divided into many groups:
various Protestant denominations, Roman Catholics,
Greek Orthodox, Syrians, Copts, Anglicans, and others,
each with its individual claim to present the truth of
religion.

Even within any one of these groups we find wide
divergence of interpretation of the truth, such as fun-
damentalists, modernists, High and Low Church, lib-

HONEST ANSWERS TO HONEST QUESTIONS

erals, conservatives, etc. The problem grows more complex. Yet everywhere men seem "incurably religious," seeking answers to questions which religion alone claims to supply. What, then, is the goal of religion? What is true religion? Where can we find it?

In a world torn with wars, fearing the future, plunged in hatreds and bent on destruction, we may well raise the question, What of religion? Some of us are sure that the evil times upon which we have fallen are due more than anything else to a lack among men of spiritual values, a failure to relate their lives to all that religion offers.

We know that we are not talking now about forms of worship, nor about creeds, so much as we are seeking that inner unity and peace and fellowship which bind men together in common brotherhood, inspired to dedicate their lives to service. For this is the basic claim of religion at its highest.

We do not rule out here the contribution to spiritual insight and the inspiration to noble living which other faiths supply. We know that "God hath not left himself without a witness anywhere." But we are concerned with the Christian faith and its principles. For us whatever may come under the name of vital religion must have at its heart the kind of God revealed in the life and teachings of Jesus. Now, what is this religion of Jesus and what is its goal? How may we share its inspiration and vision?

The Communists have said of religion—and they had in mind a form of Christianity which they had seen—"Religion is the opiate of the people." Is there any justice in such an accusation? Let us look to ourselves first.

Here in the United States we have been told that

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY "RELIGION"?

one third of the people are improperly fed, clothed, and housed. In a recent report issued by a commission in Washington, which made a study of the condition of children in our land, it was stated that one child in five does not have enough food. Over ten million men in America are unemployed. Yet the church builds costly buildings, its members seem to be comfortable, and its program includes many activities. More than fifty millions of Americans are church members. What is the church doing to meet this challenge of poverty, of suffering, of war and race prejudice which are at its doors? Is religion an opiate that helps us forget the suffering and the needy?

When I was a teacher in a college in Turkey, a group of my keenest students met together to form an atheist society. Said they, "Religion divides us and makes us enemies; if we can get rid of it, we can be brothers." They were Moslems, Jews, and Christians.

Yet for multitudes religion is the most unifying experience in their lives, an experience of God which binds them to one another as members in one common family. Last year my wife and I spent several months in India and in other distant lands. We met young people in conferences where religion brought us together and gave us a sense of our oneness.

When one has this inner experience of God's presence in life, one knows that at the heart of vital religion is the spirit of brotherly love binding men together, ending the spirit which makes for war. It goes deeper still. It creates in the heart a desire to abandon whatever divides or crushes human life. That spirit of acquisitiveness out of which come wars vanishes when real religion enters the heart. Men do not want wars, but they do want *things*, and they are willing to go to war to get things or keep things. True

HONEST ANSWERS TO HONEST QUESTIONS

religion causes men to embrace an ideal in which the community is built around love and co-operation rather than the possession of things.

Applied to our present social order this would bring in a revolution, but a revolution without sword or violence. It would involve the giving up of exploitation of weaker nations by the more powerful ones. China has suffered for many years from such selfish exploitation. The man who wrote, "In the cross of Christ I glory," wrote it on the deck of a battleship off the coast of China, when his country was fastening the cruel opium drug on China against its will.

In this emphasis on religion as an experience of God in the heart, leading one to work for a better social order and for the application of love and unselfishness to all of life, are we leaving out the relation of religion to man's personal and individual needs?

Can we ever hope to build a better social order or a warless world apart from individual men and women whose lives have been transformed by the power of God's love? But if God is concerned for us as individuals, it cannot be that he is indifferent about the social conditions in which we are placed. For in those social surroundings we know are obstacles to the abundant life which Jesus said he came to offer men.

We know that the years of our childhood are very important years. As a young minister I lived and worked in a church in the slum district of New York City. There I saw the influence of that environment on the lives of children. It was distressing. Poverty, disease, sin, stalked through those dark and dreary tenements. Vice and drunkenness kept company on every street corner. Here were hazards to the souls of every child in the district. Later I recognized in the existing social order other obstacles to men's salva-

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY "RELIGION"?

tion, just as great, and far more subtle, than the evils of the slums. For I saw men forced by economic practices to cheat competitors, or in politics turn cruel to men of other races.

A few generations back there was a general attitude that God was in his heaven and that hence all was right on earth. Religion was a force that was constantly at work, and everything was bound to get better and better in the nature of things. Economic forces were thought to work in such a way that even greedy men would be forced to work for a just distribution of wealth. One great churchman went so far as to declare, "Men are led to render the greatest service to the public when they are thinking only of their own gain."

Those of us who have lived to see this second great World War engulf the nations in its strangle-hold, and watch the processes of nationalism and imperialism and selfish power-politics at work, have no optimistic hope that by some mysterious magic or supernatural act of Providence mankind will be transmuted from selfishness to sacrificial love. The fact that Christians dare to believe that God is seeking alike the redemption of the individual and the redemption of our social order does not mean that we believe in the inevitable progress of mankind. What we do assert, out of the religious experience, is that natural forces are not the *only* influence at work upon the pages of history. Not in the hands of man alone, nor at the mercy of the natural forces about us, does our destiny lie. Our God transcends both nature and man. In the face of all the terror and sin and ruthlessness of the hosts engaged in mortal combat, we proclaim that we have shared an inner experience which enables us to hold fast a faith in a God who is Christlike in character and

HONEST ANSWERS TO HONEST QUESTIONS

whose power is incalculably greater than all the other forces now at work on human destiny. We dare to trust that his ultimate purposes are beyond defeat.

If, however, we hold this faith, we can hardly sit back and be content to let things take their course with no offering of our lives and all we are to God's great cause. Our fathers may have been able to interpret religion in terms which left them comfortable amid social conditions that gave them homes and a pleasant living, but condemned thousands of their fellows to slavery and to living conditions of unspeakable degradation and poverty. We do not believe that God is content to let things remain so, nor would he have us remain content. God needs no help from us to guide the stars in their courses, or to turn the tides of the sea, but, if our fellows are to be redeemed from war and poverty and sin, then God does need our co-operation. To refuse to enter this struggle is to desert God and abandon the field to the forces of evil.

Spiritual religion is an *inner experience* in which men discover God at work by their side, supplying them with his own strength and vision. It was Jacob Riis, who gave his life to combating the evils of the slums of lower New York's East Side, who said to some of us something I have never forgotten—"We fight to win, for we fight with God for his children."

I find young people very critical of the Church, yet often unwilling to work in the church. A Yale senior said to me: "Religion in America has compromised with the paganism of our present social order rather than offering any resistance to it, or showing that it has something to offer out of which a new world can be born. Ministers talk as though being a Christian and doing God's will would make you prosperous and successful. This was the doctrine our political leaders

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY "RELIGION"?

proclaimed before the depression, if I read them aright. America was prosperous because we were righteous! There seems to me quite a lot of sentiment in the church in the direction of securing social justice but very little is done about it."

There is too much in what this young man says to rise in protest against it. But it is fair to point out that no other organization in America is giving so much time and effort to the problems of brotherhood, industrial justice, race relations on a basis of understanding and fairness, as is the Christian Church. Hundreds of social action commissions, increasing statements and action by church groups mark the progress of the Church toward a more sincere practice of Jesus' way of life. The press and literature of the Church is seeking as never before to stir its members to think and act by the gospel of love. I can assert that the ministry, especially the younger ministers, are pressing this cause of the poor and the exploited.

Religion, if it is to be effective in our generation, must be expressed in organized forms of service. We must seek to avoid the mistake of thinking that our organization can ever take the place of the truth it seeks to incarnate. That truth man can know only partly and see through a glass darkly. Only God knows the full truth. But to the man or the woman whose heart and mind and soul are touched with the splendor of God's thoughts, with the exceeding wonder of his presence, "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, . . . shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." There is no substitute for religion in the soul of man.

DOES SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH THROW DOUBT ON RELIGIOUS TRUTHS?

THERE are many students in our high schools and colleges who are under the impression that the study of science has tended to throw doubts on the truth and value of religious faith. They have been led to believe that great scientists are agnostics, and that science, based on known facts supported by proved statements, is undermining religion.

Of course science itself is based on faith. The scientist believes that he can depend upon his sight, his hearing, his present knowledge to arrive at certain conclusions. Often, however, a later generation has proved that even scientific conclusions need to be restated in the light of more recent discoveries. Great scientists have launched out into the unknown, and the result has been radio, the discovery of radium, the knowledge about electrons, and many other important discoveries. From the known men have ventured on into the realm beyond. So religious faith is a gallant adventure on beyond. It starts with the known and bases its progress on what reason reveals, but it goes on into the unknown in an adventure of faith.

Dr. Robert Andrews Millikan is one of the greatest scientists in the world today. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics, and for research work he was given the Edison Medal. Doctor Millikan has made a study of the position taken by outstanding leaders of thought in America on this question of the relation of science to religion. He sent out the following state-

IS SCIENCE ANTAGONISTIC TO RELIGION?

ment and asked the men to whom he sent it if they would sign it. The statement reads as follows:

"We, the undersigned, deeply regret that in recent controversies there has been a tendency to present science and religion as irreconcilable and antagonistic domains of thought, for, in fact, they meet distinct human needs, and in the rounding out of human life they supplement rather than displace or oppose each other.

"The purpose of science is to develop, without prejudice or preconception of any kind, a knowledge of the facts, the laws, and the processes of nature. The even more important task of religion, on the other hand, is to develop the conscience, the ideals, and the aspirations of mankind.

"Each of these two activities represents a deep and vital function of the soul of man, and both are necessary for the life, the progress, and the happiness of the human race.

"It is a sublime conception of God which is furnished by science, and one wholly consonant with the highest ideals of religion, when it represents him as revealing himself through countless ages in the development of the earth as an abode for man and in the age-long inbreathing of life into its constituent matter, culminating in man with his spiritual nature and all his Godlike powers."

Among the men who signed their names to this statement were the following:

Charles D. Walcott, geologist, president of the National Academy of Sciences; president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and head of the Smithsonian Institution of Washington.

James Rowland Angell, psychologist, president of Yale University.

HONEST ANSWERS TO HONEST QUESTIONS

Michael I. Pupin, physicist and engineer, professor of Electro-mechanics and director of the Phoenix Research Laboratory, Columbia University.

William James Mayo, surgeon, for many years president of the American Medical Association.

Arthur A. Noyes, chemist, director of the Gates Chemical Laboratory, California Institute of Technology.

John C. Merriam, paleontologist, president of the Carnegie Institute of Washington.

Gano Dunn, chairman of the National Research Council, Washington, D. C.

As these men are all Americans let me give you the statements of some of the leading men of science across the seas. Sir William Crooks, the world's leading chemist, writes, "I cannot imagine the possibility of anyone with ordinary intelligence entertaining the least doubt as to the existence of a God, a Law-Giver and a Life-Giver."

Sir James Geikie, dean of the Faculty of Science of Edinburgh University, writes, "It is simply an impertinence to say that 'the leading scientists are irreligious or anti-Christian.' "

I have given these statements of some leading men of science on this question, because I find that high-school boys and girls are often upset by the remarks of some young teacher in science who cannot pretend to be in the same class with these men. If you have such a teacher confront him with these statements by the *really great scientists* if he says that one cannot be scientific and at the same time believe in God. *It is not true.*

Of course the reasonableness of religious faith and the interpretation of religion in relation to its significance to our universe and life it is not the business of

IS SCIENCE ANTAGONISTIC TO RELIGION?

the scientist to prove. The men to whom we should go if we seek such proofs are those who have given of their heart and mind and strength in devotion to *the realm of religious truth*. As Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick well says: "Far more important than the opinions of the individual scientists for religion or against it is the fact that scientists are coming increasingly to recognize the limitations of their field. The field of science is limited; its domain is the system of facts and their laws, which make the immediate environment of man's life; but with the *Origin* of all life, with the character of the Power that sustains us and the Destiny that lies ahead of us *science does not deal, and cannot deal.*"

We live in a universe where today there are *two* answers to many questions, where to primitive man there was but one. To him a religious answer and a scientific answer were the same thing. He would have said that a god caused it to rain, and made it rain. Today we have a scientific answer to such a question as to *what causes rain*, but there is also a religious answer the specialist in religion claims, out of his years of faithful study, in which he is unafraid of the *scientific method* of following after truth. For of those laws as an explanation as to what causes rain there remains the question, *What intelligence is behind those laws?* Religion has an answer. Leading scientists agree that the answer is not *inconsistent* with scientific truth and is a far more logical, intelligent, and satisfactory answer than any theory based on the supposition that there is no God, but only blind force behind this universe.

It is an answer which ennobles all of life and places values on life in its fullest and finest qualities, so that religion becomes the pearl of great price, second to nothing in importance to life and life's enduring values.

IS A CODE OF ETHICS A SUBSTITUTE FOR RELIGION?

A COLLEGE professor pointed to a church spire and said to me, "If only we could get rid of churches and all this supernatural religion, and build our lives around an ethical code, we would take a great step forward."

There are writers and thinkers who claim that belief in the existence of God is inconsistent with modern thought, and that ethics, based on scientific investigation and sociological knowledge of men's needs, will supplant religion.

On the other hand there are hosts of men and women who have found in their religious faith and experience something which no ethical code can supply. They affirm that those deeper needs of the human heart and those higher springs of social action must find their comfort and their strength in religion.

It is true that science shows us today what is good and what is harmful in realms where once man turned to religion for such light. Ethics are moral codes built up on scientific knowledge rather than on spiritual revelation. For these reasons the claim is made that social morality and guidance in one's personal problems depend upon reasoning processes rather than upon emotional experience. "Face the facts" these people demand.

At once some questions rise and ask for answers. Is it true that a person who is ethical but with no religious faith, is of as great value to a community as one with that same code but with religious convictions?

IS ETHICS A SUBSTITUTE FOR RELIGION?

If religious faith were to vanish from the hearts of men, might we expect a better and higher social order a century hence? What are some of the immediate consequences which might be expected in the average community, if religious faith were supplanted by an ethical code devoid of belief in God and immortality?

As a teacher I am aware that there are young men and women who argue that morals are not dependent upon religion. Some of them go so far as to assert that the moral level of the community would be raised if we could get rid of religion. They enjoy quoting college professors and learned writers as declaring that ethics has established its right to exist independent of any religious support or sanction.

This marks a vast gulf between our generation and that of our forefathers. For them back of all morals was God's law. The Ten Commandments were written by God in the consciences of men. Watch the looks of incredulity that appear if you attempt to state that in any tone of final authority. Any truth in such laws today is due, you will be told, to the proof which human history and the experience of the race can offer, not to any "divine revelation." Much in the moral codes of our fathers, and which they were sure was rooted in the law of God, we no longer obey nor approve. Take as a single example the way of observing the Sabbath.

Many young people are saying that the only authority is an inner one. Whatever seems right to you, that is your authority. The Bible, the Church, religion—these have vanished as sources of moral authority. Sociology tells us that moral codes are simply the products of social custom. Psychology teaches that they are the results of reflexes due to environment and heredity. Thus, more and more, ethics and religion

HONEST ANSWERS TO HONEST QUESTIONS

are drifting apart. Science seems to support the arguments of those who claim that we can abandon religion and still live moral lives to high ends. Ethical autonomy is the heart of the gospel of the Humanists. Recently I saw the results of a poll taken by a newspaper in which sixty per cent of the readers stated that they no longer believed in God.

During my childhood the Sabbath was a day set apart for worship and meditation. One was reminded that religion had a definite place in the life of the community. But today, with moving-picture houses packed, baseball games drawing great crowds, and all sorts of secular opportunities for amusement clamoring for attention, there is less and less evidence that religion plays any important part in the life of the average community. Religious services at colleges were well attended a score of years ago, where today, even when a well-known preacher visits the campus, a scant minority of the student body comes to the college chapel, from which all compulsory attendance has been banished.

Everywhere young people are asking "Why turn to religion when out of man's study of scientific law and social change he can establish the kind of moral law which will best meet his needs?" Are these folk right when they say, "Away with religion; build your own ethical code"?

Of course we need to define what we mean by religion. In a previous chapter¹ we discussed that question and arrived at the conclusion that vital religion is at its heart *an experience*. If that be true, then the abandonment of some verse in a creed or a changing attitude toward some custom does not imply that reli-

¹ Chapter on "What Do You Mean by 'Religion'?"

IS ETHICS A SUBSTITUTE FOR RELIGION?

gion *per se* has lost its significance. Are we not justified in asserting that where men are discovering in the universe and its laws, in their own hearts and in the lives of others, a moral significance related to life, that does not detract but, rather, adds to the validity of our claims for religion? Religion, in other words, is being rediscovered in man himself and in the universe rather than in ancient creeds, institutions, and old books.

What criticism does the Christian make of the claims of these people who scoff at religion? They assert that truth, beauty, and even goodness and love, are spiritual values in human experience. But the essence of their philosophy is materialistic. They deny that there is any spiritual or eternal reality in man or in the universe. At least not in any ultimate or abiding values. There is nothing that will remain at last save matter, and all the things we value most are at the mercy of the things we value least. Life is a bubble, blown for a moment to burst and vanish forever. All that we call an experience of God, this awareness of Ultimate Reality, this sense of relationship which can only be expressed in terms of love and friendship—all these become but dreams of our own making and have no relationship to the ultimate nature of the universe and man. One has a right to raise the question as to what ethical social order can be built around so tragic and depressing a conception of life as that? Can the highest and best in man flourish or come to fruition out of such a materialistic philosophy?

But some will want to interrupt. Are not some of the finest and bravest among us, idealists with a passion for justice, without any religious faith? Are not spiritual values highest in their code, even though they seem unable to believe that these values have any

HONEST ANSWERS TO HONEST QUESTIONS

reality outside of man's limited earthly life? If such men make the most of such values while they live, ought we to say that they are not idealists, or claim that for them materialism is the outstanding reality? My joy in a friendship may be more real to me than a rock on which my friend stands, and which will go on existing long after my friend has passed away. But while the friendship lasts and the friends are conscious of that tie, does it not have a certain abiding reality for them? In so far as they make of that friendship something which dares stand against the universe with its impersonal facts, are they not idealists of the highest type? They would say that they are too humble to claim that man is of such importance as to endure beyond the consciousness of life on earth.

Here, again, the man or woman with religious faith feels that something is woefully lacking in such a philosophy. I refer to personality and its value in the scheme of things. The unbeliever says that he is too humble to claim immortality for man. But does he not claim that personality emerges by mere chance on this insignificant planet? The religious faith of the Christian, placing individual personality above the worth of stars and suns, seems the height of the ridiculous to the other. But what of the egoism of a philosophy that takes sword in hand and rises up against the whole universe and declares: "I alone have conscious thought and intelligent reason. No mind is greater than mine, no goodness is to be found anywhere in the universe save in this creature man"? What of the egoism that faces the entire cosmos and makes such assertions? Has it not substituted the creed of the Christian for a creed of its own which begins, "I believe in man the almighty," and which involves a vast amount of credulity to accept?

IS ETHICS A SUBSTITUTE FOR RELIGION?

Whence comes man's sense of right and wrong, his ability to appreciate beauty and truth and goodness? Whence comes his awareness of spiritual values? Whence comes the ability to reach out and take in all that which the spirit of man seems to discover as a fellowship with the Unseen but the Real?

The chief criticism which the Christian makes of this philosophy of life lies in its assertion that the ultimate fact about life and the universe is that matter is what is real and all qualitative experiences are merely subjective with no relationship to anything eternally real at the heart of the universe. If there is no immortality, no spirit in man, no God of goodness, love, and service, then the very fact that we have been able to achieve such faith and hope and love leaves us the more lonely in a universe which has no answer to our prayers, no purpose concerned with the destiny of man. This would make of the universe a place utterly alien to spiritual ideals. In it personality has small abiding value. A tragic sense of defeat broods over men who hold such a philosophy. Professor Otto, one of the ablest writers of this philosophy of despair, writes in his book, *Things and Ideals*: "Real defeat will overtake humanity only in so far as men themselves, forgetting that they are comrades in doom and agents of each other's woe or weal, go down the years estranged from the one friend they have—each other." "Comrades in doom"! John and Peter, Paul and Timothy, Luke and Jesus, Phillips Brooks and Augustine, Francis of Assisi and Luther—with no friend save one subject to the ravages of the grave and the finality of death! And then I hear such words of triumph as these, "I know in whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep me over against that day." Some of us have had an experience

HONEST ANSWERS TO HONEST QUESTIONS

that remains *unexplained* if Otto is right about the nature of man and the universe.

What ultimate ethical code will survive such a philosophy? Will man, convinced that his whole existence is due to mere chance, and that he himself is nothing more than an atom of matter, alive somehow for one brief moment between two endless nights, working blindly at his fate but with no hope, be held responsible for any act? If all sources of inspiration lie within the brain cell, and that which we call experience be but an expression of matter, will man be expected to build a future in which justice, sacrifice, and love will play dominant rôles? Can selfishness and cruelty be defeated by such a philosophy, or can man be expected to work toward a co-operative commonwealth? Do we not see in the Russia of Stalin and the pagan philosophy of Nazi Germany the results of such a creed? Are not the battlefields of this new and terrible war the answer to such questions?

These unbelievers say that Christians have made of religion an opiate, an escape mechanism from the realities of life. Can it not be said with some conviction that they do this very thing themselves? Do they not retreat into their own theories in the face of what they assert to be the facts? The facts, they say, are tragic—no God, no immortality, no ultimate reality save matter, no purpose, no heaven, nothing but dust in which we are "comrades in doom." Then, in order to escape the terrible implications of such a philosophy, they build a defense mechanism in an attitude toward life which urges indifference toward the unpleasant facts and urges men to live as though the good in them were of abiding significance. They seem to me like a man who, thinking the mountain is a volcano and about to erupt, jumps down the crater.

IS ETHICS A SUBSTITUTE FOR RELIGION?

If, however, we Christians claim that religion adds something to life that ethics alone cannot offer, we must accept the challenge which much in a humanist's philosophy presents. If there are to be found unselfish and sacrificial men and women lacking spiritual faith, then how much more ought we to expect in sacrifice and service of those who hold such a faith? The final estimate of personality in the Christian faith can be summed up in those words from the New Testament, "Fellow workers together with God, called to be saints." For the redemption of mankind from such paganism as is now laying the world in ruins we shall need a triumphant spiritual faith. For the saving of men from social as well as individual defeat we shall need a conception of life's ultimate values in words that ring with triumph and inspire courage. This courage must be built on reality, not on fantasy. Only in God can such abiding reality be found. Whether one is an unbeliever or holds the Christian faith, one must choose amid much that is unknowable. Science, psychology, history, experience—all seem to me to support the faith that dares to believe in God, a living, holy, triumphant God of life and love, whose purposes are ultimately beyond defeat.

DOES GOD HAVE A PURPOSE FOR MY LIFE?

THIS is a question which thousands of young people face each year; that is, if they are earnest and eager to make their lives count for Christ. Someone once said that to be disappointed in love is a *tragedy*, but that to be disappointed in *life* is far worse. If God has a purpose for my life, something he is counting on me to do, and I fail him, could there be any failure *worse than that?*

Ever since Jesus stood by the Sea of Galilee and called Peter and John to leave all and follow him, every generation has produced young men and women who have heard that call:

"Jesus calls *us*: by thy mercies,
Saviour, may *we* hear thy call."

Turn to your hymnbooks and you will find that countless hymns proclaim that God calls men and women; read a few of the great biographies of Christian leaders, and you will discover that they are sure that God called them to their lifework. Jesus again and again tried to tell people that no matter how small their gifts might seem to be, God could make use of their lives in his service. Now, if God has a work for you to do, there is no other work in which you will be as happy and of as great service as in that of *his first choice*. It does not mean that he cannot use you if you refuse to follow his best choice, but it will be a *second best*.

Is there, then, any way by which I can discover God's

DOES GOD HAVE A PURPOSE FOR MY LIFE?

will for my life? I believe there is. It would be very strange if God has some work for you to do and is unable to show you what that work is, unless you refuse to let him show it to you. Of course you can refuse to listen. God never wants *conscripts* in his service. He wants *volunteers*. "*Here am I, send me.*"

So the *first* prerequisite of discovering God's will is that you are *willing to know*. That means that *whatever, wherever, whenever* it may be that God wants you to serve, you are ready. You are willing to go to the heart of China, to Africa, into the great cities of America, or to some lonely country place, *provided* it is God's call. You will put no limitations on God. You won't say, "I'm willing to serve God in America, but not as a foreign missionary." That would mean that *you* are telling God what you will not do, no matter what *his will* may be. *You cannot find the will of God that way*. What soldier could say to his general, "I'm willing to serve behind the lines, but not at the front"? Would the general accept *him*? So we begin by saying,

"I'll go where you want me to go, dear Lord,
I'll be what you want me to be."

This is not an abject *surrender*, it is an eager *consecration*.

All through history the Christian fellowship has maintained that we could have *communion with God*. That means that we can talk with God, and he can reveal his thoughts to us. Prayer and meditation are such means. Through an open mind and willing heart he speaks to us.

Do you open your heart to God in prayer and meditation, and do you *listen* for his "still small voice"?

In the Bible we have the best record of men who dis-

HONEST ANSWERS TO HONEST QUESTIONS

covered God in their lives. They made their mistakes, but they kept on. In Jesus we have the altogether perfect man, the One who could say, "I do always the will of Him that sent me." A faithful, continuous, earnest study of the Bible, especially the life and teachings of Jesus, is another means of discovering how God reveals himself to human hearts. *The second prerequisite, then, is prayer and a study of the Bible.*

Now, God gave us our minds. We were meant to use them. These people who tell you not to rely on the mind are wrong, unless God made some terrible mistake. If we can't rely on our mind, then this is a crazy world. Jesus said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy *mind*."

Any use of our minds would lead us to this conclusion right away, it seems to me. In this kind of world, with all its need for Christlike service, it is not possible that God would call Christian men or women to give their lives *where there is no need*. In other words, the call will be to a *need*.

"God, give us men.

A time like this demands

Strong hearts, true faith, and willing hands."

Now, there are many needs. Some of these needs are much greater than others. For some of these needs there are few offering themselves. Let me mention a few needs which God must want filled today: There are parts of the world where there are too few doctors. There are parts of the world where there are too few schools. Think of the need for men and women who will practice in our own country the Christlike life among people of different color. In parts of our country people pray and read their Bible and then refuse to treat fairly a person of darker skin. Our home mis-

DOES GOD HAVE A PURPOSE FOR MY LIFE?

sionary boards are eager to find young men and women who are willing to teach in schools where race prejudice is being broken down. Think of the need in business today for men who will treat those who work for them as brothers rather than as so many "hands" through whom they make money. Amid the lawlessness of our land what a need for men in politics who will stand for honor, for justice, for right, and will not sell their votes; men who will be defeated rather than tarnish their Christian ideals!

I would state as a third prerequisite for discovering the will of God a faithful study of the *needs*, and a willingness to make a careful *comparison* of those needs. This means that you will read books which tell about the work being done by foreign missions in our own country in various lines of work. It means that you will talk with people who can tell you about such needs, and that your mind will ever be open for God's call. Some day, probably through some great need, you will hear his voice, and you will *know* he is calling *you*.

But it would not be fair to leave it here. For there is another factor in this which needs to be taken into consideration. I call that the *personal factor*. We are all different. One boy has the possibilities of being a great doctor, another would make a poor doctor, but a great teacher. God doesn't want poor doctors who might be fine teachers. He will call you to something you can do with all your heart and soul, and for which you are fitted, provided doing his will is your greatest joy; doing his will, because you know that to do his will means the greatest possible chance to be of service to others.

So a fourth prerequisite will be to *study yourself*, find out what line of work you are fitted for, the kind

HONEST ANSWERS TO HONEST QUESTIONS

of work into which you can throw yourself heart and soul. But I ought to warn you right here. It is not what you can do *now*; it is, rather, *what you can become with God's help*.

Amid the problems of life you will have your own peculiar problems. It may be that death in your family, sickness at home, financial burdens prevent you from securing the kind of education you have longed for, and seem to close the door to the fuller life of service. It requires more strength of character in such circumstances of life to remain true to the vision of God's service and find in your more limited field his will, than if the plans for wider opportunities had been completed.

And, last of all, wherever, whenever, and to whatever task he calls, or from whatever door he holds us back, we can say, in going to some great task, or remaining in some seemingly obscure corner, "*I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me.*"

WHY BELIEVE IN LIFE AFTER DEATH?

SOMEONE has said that the strange thing about life after death is not that people believe in it, but that so many who profess such a belief live as if it were a matter of no consequence. Indeed, how soon the Easter message is forgotten!

Easter, of course, is the occasion of greatest importance in the Christian Church. Its message is immortality. For a brief season we chant our hymns of hope and find our minds directed toward the life beyond, which Christ has made radiant for all who believe in him. On Easter morning we are swept along as on some tidal wave of song and memory and hope. But very soon the Easter hope loses its lifting power and we sink back again to the humdrum levels of this workaday world.

No wonder that Ferdinand Schiller, in his *Problems of Belief*, characterizes faith in immortality as a "half belief." He says its "vitality is intermittent," that it comes and goes. In the minds of most people it receives scant attention until Easter comes round, unless perforce death invades one's family or the circle of his immediate friends. But isn't the belief of any value at other times? Is Easter nothing more than a spring festival of music and flowers? Is there nothing that we can do throughout the year with this Christian hope? If not, what is the use of believing in it?

1. This belief is valuable because it helps to banish our fear of death. That is what it did for the early Christians. After the resurrection of Jesus, the specter

HONEST ANSWERS TO HONEST QUESTIONS

of death had no more terrors for them. Schiller goes on to say in the volume just mentioned that one reason why people talk so little about the life beyond is because they shrink from death. For life beyond involves leaving this life. The experience of immortality necessitates either my own death or the death of some loved one, and I shudder at both. The fact of death stands like a "great taboo" between us and any real serious thinking about the nature or value of immortality. "Hush!" we say, when the question is suggested, "let's talk about something pleasant." And it is not until the taboo has been torn away by a death in our own immediate circle that we begin to think frankly and fearlessly about the whole matter. But when such a moment comes and one begins to ponder upon the life beyond, and its possibility of growth or change or adventure, then death ceases to be so dreadful a thing.

Surely, it is good for a man to take a healthy and robust attitude toward this Easter faith. It is good for him to think about immortality, to talk about it and to commit himself to believe in it. For such a positive and wholesome attitude will bring a man great comfort some day. Perhaps it is a commonplace to say that no one can tell when he may be called upon to give up some beloved relative or friend. But it is not a commonplace to ask, "How am I preparing to meet such a crisis? Am I getting ready to meet it with courage and poise or am I just drifting along, hoping against hope that fortune will postpone the evil day?"

Some people pass through the experience of bereavement with hope and exaltation, while others are stricken, dumb and embittered. And what makes the difference is usually faith or lack of faith in the possibility of survival. Furthermore, what faith in immortality means to a man in such a crisis depends on what

LIFE AFTER DEATH

his faith has meant to him during the years that precede the crisis. When sorrow comes, the question is whether one has some hope to fall back on, some habit of thought or belief to which he will naturally turn because it is so familiar.

One may build himself up in this kind of faith by thinking about it and accepting it. Let him say, "I *believe* in the life everlasting." Let him study the evidences for the survival of personality. Let him establish his confidence in such a survival. Let him make himself at home in its teachings. Let him dream about the "great adventure." Thus will the fear of death cease gradually to be. The great taboo will lose its dreadful visage. For the man of faith will be building for himself a bulwark of defense in which he can put his trust.

2. What is the use of believing in life after death? Because such a belief when firmly held will direct and inspire one's present life. A man can begin to live the eternal life here and now. In the thought of Jesus as presented in the Gospel of John, "eternal life" is a present experience. One need not wait to begin it until he has died. One may begin it today wherever he resides. For eternal life is a certain kind of life, a life worthy of man's best efforts here and therefore worthy to endure.

Of course immortality has not always been so defined in Christian thought. Some people have used the phrases "eternal life" or "immortal life" to mean the land of rest, "the sweet and blessed country which eager hearts expect." Such a belief has often made men restless to get away from the ills of earth and disinterested in its present problems. The tendency today among younger people is quite different. The emphasis now is on this life. One is sure of this life.

HONEST ANSWERS TO HONEST QUESTIONS

He cannot be sure of any other. Let him live this life for all it is worth. Let him do the things that ought to be done for the sake of himself, his family, his friends, and his community. There is enough to do now to tax the ingenuity and courage of any red-blooded individual. There may be a future life, but why bother about it? So runs the familiar argument.

But why is it necessary to balance this older and newer point of view over against each other, or feel that you are driven to accept the one rather than the other? There is a third and better way. It is to think of this life and the life beyond as related to each other as stages in one continuous process. This may involve some change of thinking about the nature of life after death. And so it does for most people.

For example, it seems to many persons that life in the next world will not be so unlike our life here as our grandparents believed. Perhaps death will not work any instantaneous change in our character or disposition. We know that when we pass from one locality to another in this world, we do not instantly change our personalities. When a youth graduates from high school and enters college, or leaves home to take a position in another city, he does not shed his habits, his thoughts, his skills, his disposition and his character as a serpent sheds its skin. He who enters a new locality or takes a new position is about the same person as when he left the old one.

So we are coming to think that when the door of death swings open and we find ourselves on "the other side," we shall be the kind of persons that we have been making ourselves here. We shall not take our old bodies. Of that we are sure. And all the things that we have invented and manufactured to serve our bodily needs will cease to be of use to us. But our minds,

LIFE AFTER DEATH

our tastes, our desires, our habits and our hopes—in fact, all those intangible qualities of life that we have been assembling here and call personality—these it seems likely we shall have or shall be when we arrive on the other side.

This is what is meant by living the eternal life here and now. It is an endeavor to think of life as all of one piece and of death as a graduation from the earthly sphere to the higher sphere. It is an endeavor to build up now those qualities which are likely to stand the test of the great "graduation." A man determines to do his best here in order that he may be his best there. He believes that what is worthy to persist there is worth striving for here. He dares to make this leap of faith because he finds that the world as he knows it is not a topsy-turvy world, but a world of cause and effect, of tried and proved values. And out of his understanding of such a world he comes to believe that the same laws must govern any stage of life to which he may ever be called upon to go. This point of view does not make him disinterested in this world or morbid about the next. He neither courts death nor fears it. He will play the game on the present stage as hard and as well as he can play it. But in so far as he can gain any idea of what the life beyond is like or will demand, he allows that idea to inspire and to direct him in his present choices and in his immediate work.

BV
4531
.H28

Harlow

Harlow
13-11

Honest answers to
honest questions.

1351741

2- 10032

2- 10032

BV4531
H28

1351741

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO



48 441 990